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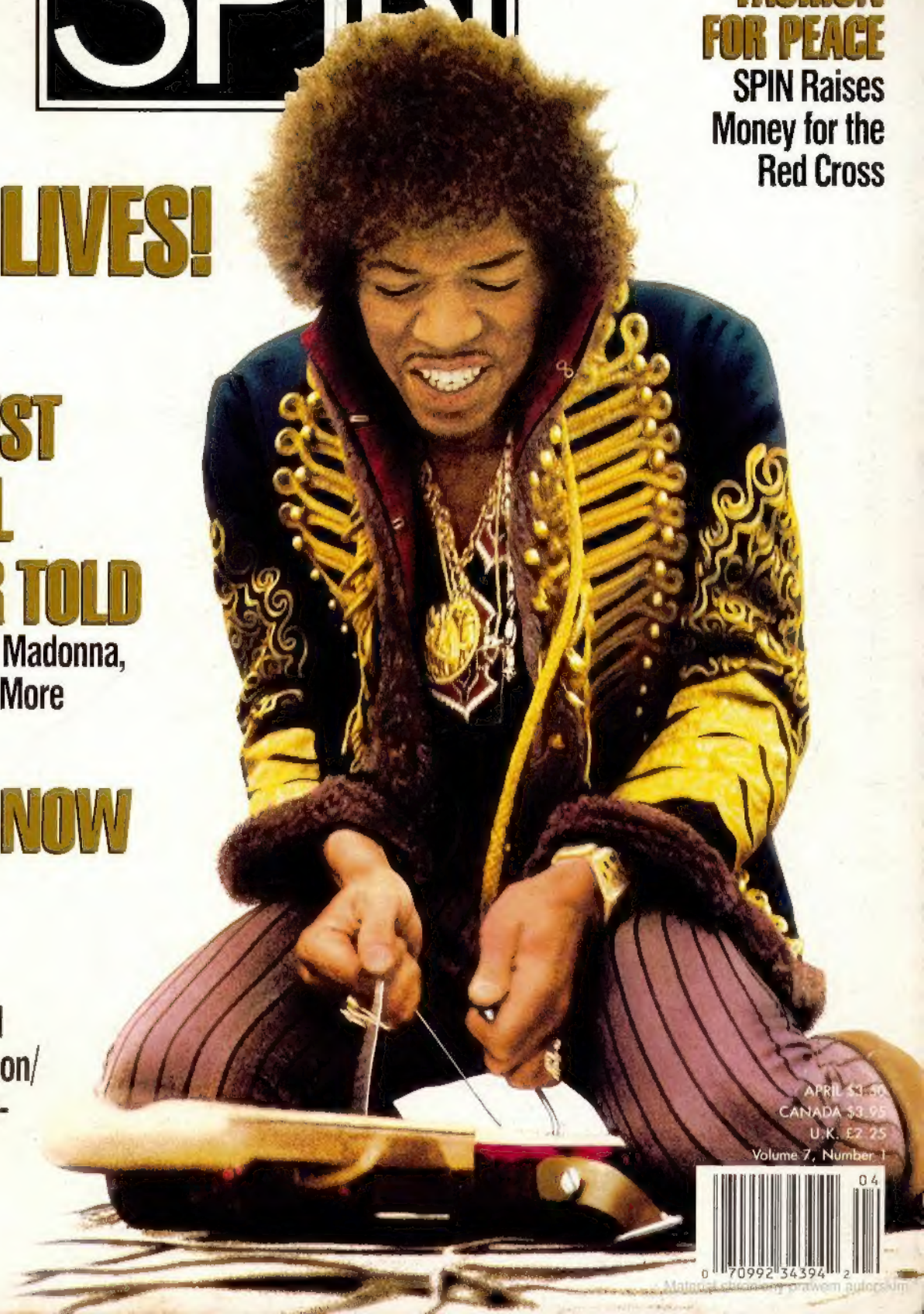

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IN

SPECIAL 6TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

Fashion for Peace, Page 60.

Top artists, pop stars, and designers wear T-shirts for peace, designed exclusively for SPIN. The T-shirts are available for purchase (see page 68), and proceeds will go to the American Red Cross. Michael Stipe, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, L.L. Cool J, John Mellencamp, De La Soul, Lady Miss Kier, Sebastian Bach, Deborah Harry, Spike Lee, ZZ Top—and a host of others came out for the cause.

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R.E.M.

OUT OF TIME

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TOP SPIN

I hoped for happiness and light,
but trouble and darkness
came instead.
I am torn apart by worry
and pain; I have had
day after day of suffering.
—Job 30: 26–27

The paradox of religion is that the essence of what it offers is the very thing it implores you to accept you can never attain: relief from suffering. Suffering is the currency of religion, at the core of which is the dilemma of faith—did man create God to justify the inexplicable suffering, or did God create man and decree that he should suffer?

One of the reasons I like the church I go to is that they don't strictly preach the impossible teachings of God but instead give shape and meaning to the pain and trauma of the failed attempts to live as God would like us to. They're realistic. They acknowledge that suffering is unpleasant and mystifying, and that a great part of the overwhelming struggle of life is anticipation of and resignation to the inevitability of suffering. By admitting the complexity of the paradox, these priests help make it more livable.

When the war in the Middle East began, even before our first casualties, we all felt, in one way or another, a palpable gloom, the way you feel a terrible storm in the heavier than usual calm beforehand. At my church we prayed for peace—stunned, a little frightened and, I think, more than a few of us privately unconfident that prayers would or could make any difference. It was not a matter of faith because faith by definition is irrational. We printed "Pray for Peace" on the cover of last month's issue—and meant and mean it—because we believe that on some level, whether divine or psychic, a peace consciousness will help steer us toward peace. But even still, the rational, frail side of human nature fears—despairs at—the certainty of tremendous suffering. And the fact that we don't understand why we have to endure it. We filled places of worship not only to pray for higher-power intervention but also some answers, some explanations. Because we fear there's no God. That, after all, like untended children, we're left to our own devices and we will simply destroy each other.

In Japanese author Shūsaku Endō's book *Silence*, based on the true story of Catholic missionaries persecuted in 17th-century Japan, the prayers of the priests to stop the torture of themselves and the other captured Christians go unanswered. In order to get the priests to apostasize—renounce their faith and trample on the image of Christ—the shogun who has made this his campaign tortures the stubborn converts horrifically, taunting the fathers as to why their God didn't save them, why He allowed such needless suffering. The main priest in the story, Father Rodrigues, has been asking himself, and God, the same question for a long time by this point. But all he gets back is God's maddening silence.

As we watch the dreadful war in the Middle East unfold and escalate, we are like that priest, perplexed by and angry at God for His silence. Some of us think of it in those, specifically religious, terms, others feel the helplessness nonspecifically. At least religion provides an affiliation, an organization to complain through if you're a member. And maybe that's a significant aspect of what religion is, a gigantic complaint bureau. It's certainly a big part of what it's used for.

But suffering is the cornerstone of religion because it's the cornerstone of human experience. Religion tries to help us exorcise it by getting us to embrace it. We pray for peace automatically, mechanically, with all our hearts, sure, but with a superstitious repetition. We murmur our hopes into the hopelessness. We beseech the silence.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

Sebastian Bach, from Skid Row, with Bob Guccione, Jr. *(left)*, was just one of many artists, designers, and pop personalities who slipped into something more peaceful as part of Fashion for Peace, beginning on page 60.

GREG WATERMANN

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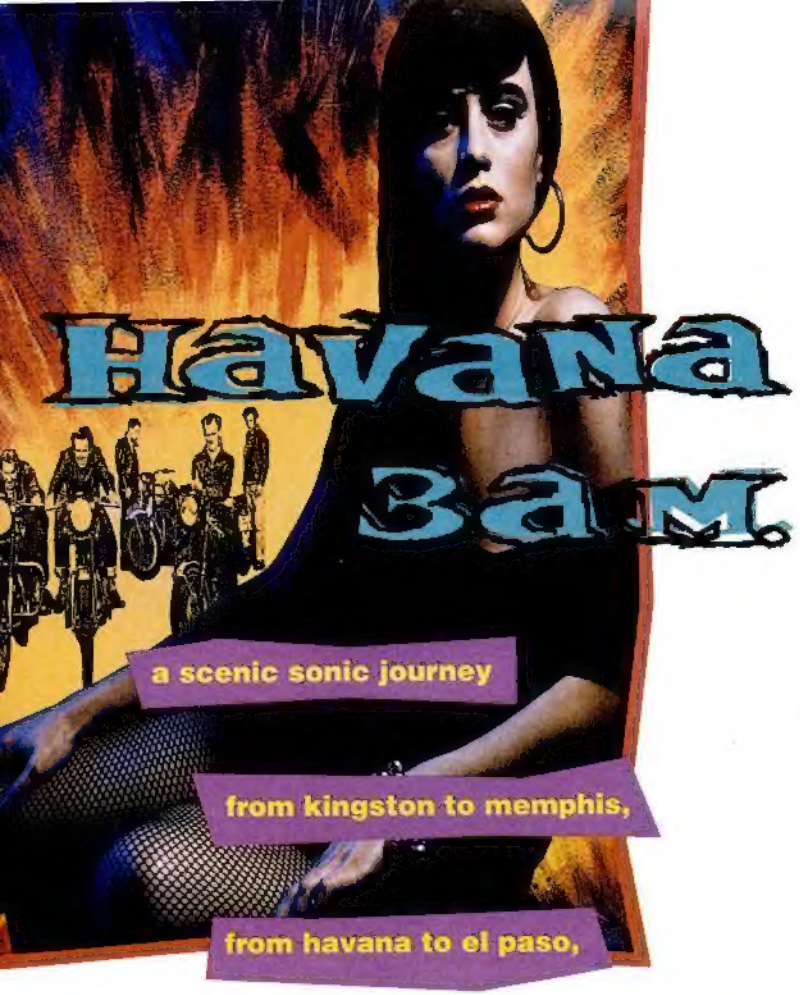
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POINT BLANK LETTERS

EDITED BY
NATHANIEL WICE

The Five Percent: A Wooden Nickel?

Thank you for printing an unbiased article on the Five Percent Nation of Islam ("The Five Percent Solution," February '91). The Five is not a fad, it's a movement. I believe in the Five. It has taken young brothers out of gangs and turned them around, teaching them their history and knowledge of themselves. Not all Fives are so-called racists. If this were the case then KMD wouldn't hang out with 3rd Bass. The Five is very aware of what's going on in "AmeriKKKa" today and these kids are doing something about it, whether you agree with it or not.
Sam Thomas III
Los Angeles, California

"The Five Percent Solution" was a useful introduction to a most virulent form of racism. I'm puzzled, however, how you can present such a timely and responsible warning when you've used so much ink defying black cultural figures strongly influenced by parallel lines of thinking. You will have to decide which side you're on. If you feel so guilty about being white that you have a death wish about it, then commit suicide, privately and discreetly. Don't force the rest of us to join you by building up black extremist elements that would destroy us if they could.
Arnold Schlacht
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fighting racism with racism is a lot like trying to use Activator to put out the flames on Michael Jackson's head—frightening, dangerous, and neither "wise" nor "intelligent."

Black supremacy equals white supremacy equals dumb. Islamic fanaticism is just as silly as that of any Bible-banging bigot. Quick! Find me a word for African-American redneck! Blackneck? Maybe that will work.

People in the Five Percent Nation, you should forget about your "tesson" and listen to your heart.
Ringo Jukes
New York, New York

I'm not a Five Percenter, but if you think learning about one's own culture and race is racist, then let the message be racist.
Craig Brittingham
Rehoboth, Delaware

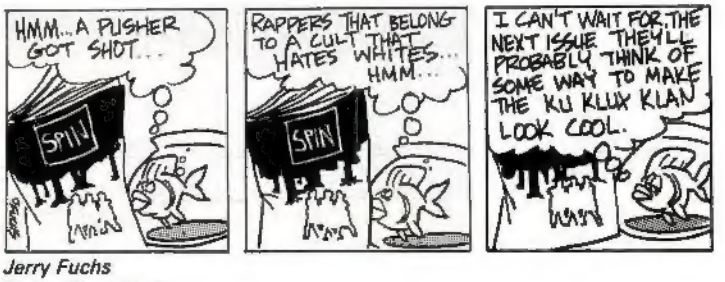
I would like to point out that all of the great oppressors were not "blond-haired, blue-eyed white men." Think of Genghis Khan, Idi Amin, the Chinese Communists under Mao, and more recently, Saddam Hussein.
Geoffrey A. Ewart
Boise, Idaho

I'm a 19-year-old Spanish, black, and white male chillin' in tha desert here in Saudi Arabia. Maybe y'all could tell me what tha fuck's goin' on over there? Is the whole muthafuckin' country becomin' racist? The whites are dissin' blacks and the blacks are dissin' whites. I ain't got time to worry about a person's color or religion. If I get shot I bleed red blood. The U.S. better stop all that shit and start workin' together for peace or we can just call it quits.

Peace from tha Middle East.
Antone "Dice Lazy" Hartman
Operation Desert Shield
Saudi Arabia

The White Trash You Love

Poor Andrew Dice Clay—feminists pick on him to get media attention.


HMM... A PUSHER GOT SHOT...
SPIN
RAPPERS THAT BELONG TO A CULT THAT HATES WHITES... HMM...
SPIN
I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE THEY'LL PROBABLY THINK OF SOME WAY TO MAKE THE KU KLUX KLAN LOOK COOL.

Jerry Fuchs
Dover, New Jersey

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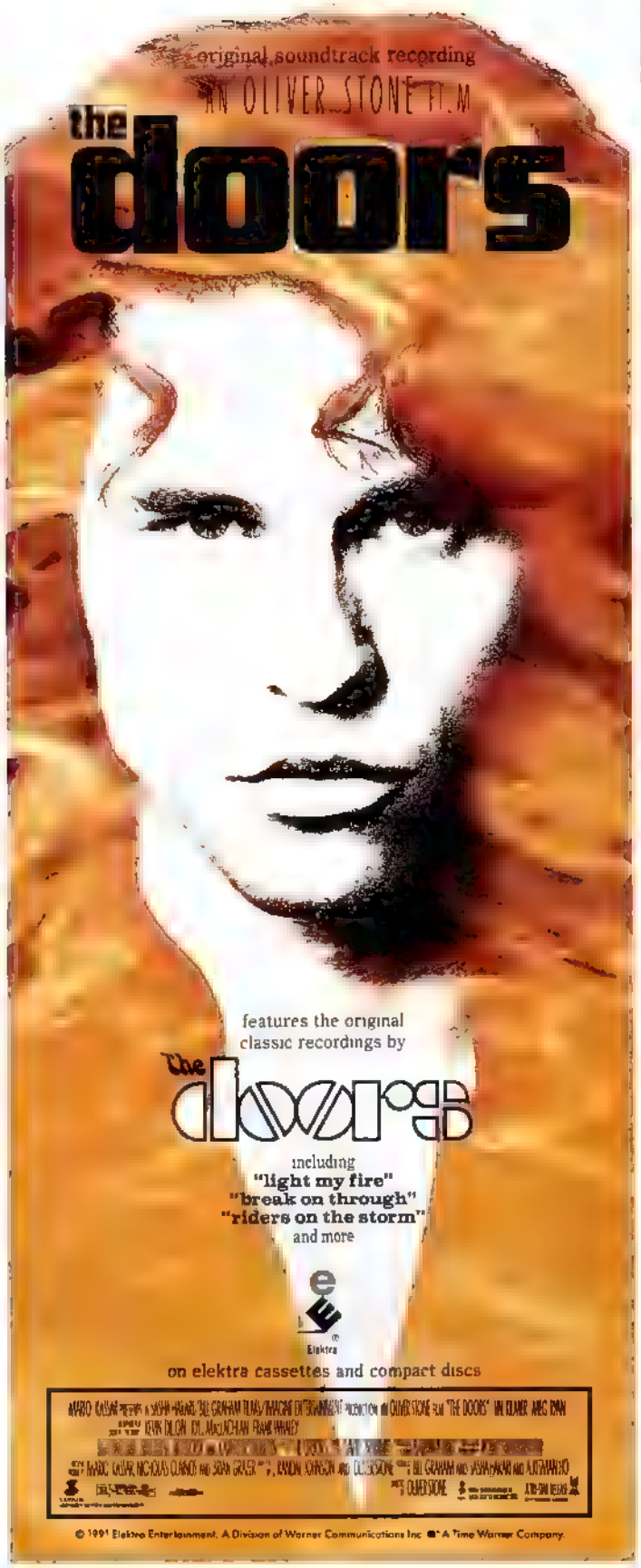

Isn't that just slightly mixed up? His whole act is built on the nasty appeal of "conservative comedy" that politically correct weenies can't stand. So at the risk of sounding like a feminist and being laughed at, why do I find it hard to laugh at someone who thinks that girls just want to be spanked? Fuck that shit. Clay should hook up with Madonna; they'd set a new record for ticket sales and controversy.
Susan Zieger
Staten Island, New York

The Big Picture

The February issue covered more than music: drugs, race, environment, and disease. All these problems could be solved (or cease to be exacerbated) if our leaders and voters understood how biology legislates ends.

Biologists understand but get their grants from the government, which subverts race by use of drugs while despoiling environment and thus fostering disease. The drug war continues to keep fear focused on ghetto blacks, who have nothing left to sell, except sex. The result is a massive elevation of stress, registered by individual and global pathological spikes, as a sort of macrocosmic lie detector.

So dig it: Our cells have immunological mechanisms to curb overaging of toxins within; the biosphere is a cell too, and when threatened, it too curbs within. AIDS is such a mechanism: Cut off its head, and some other statistical mechanism, like war, will thin our narrow ass out. Eschewing sex merely raises stress, which raises steroid levels: This detunes immunity (*and may well activate the virus*). Nowhere to run. It's truth or die. Blacks be da most immediate victims of untruth and so have become our chief poets. The music business empowers them to legislate, if we have ears to hear.
Michael Newman
a.k.a. Ofay Brutha (Da Fay Bro)
New Haven, Connecticut

AIDS Support

In regard to Celia Farber's AIDS column, please . . .

Keep writing.

Keep writing.

Keep writing.

Those of us who have lost friends and partners need to know. We need to know why and how. Please remember there is a new generation of victims and their families. We care. Please keep writing.

We *will* keep reading.
Peter Smith
Niagara Falls, New York

Groove Is in the Beefheart

Hey, is Captain Beefheart God [February '91]? He should be.
Dave Soltis
Freeport, Ohio

Bully for You, II

Oooh! That Glenn Danzig is *sooo* scary and mean [January '91]! I could actually picture his "bulging biceps tense up" when he killed that most threatening pumpkin. Let 'i'l Glenn pump himself up all he wants, cause it ain't gonna change the fact that his music will always remain boring, contrived hard rock directed at misguided preteens. Sorry postapocalyptic mall kids, the cover should have read: "Danzig: Actual Size."
Parker T. Gibbs
San Francisco, California

Glenn Danzig, a hero? C'mon, get real. There's a big difference between a hero—one who's defied the odds, and wins—and a villain, one who creates difficult odds against others in order to crush their opportunities. The truth is that Glenn is far from the "evil Elvis" that the media is portraying him to be. In my opinion he's a paranoid schizophrenic who has ruined a lot of friends' lives because he thought they might be doing something to him. I've tried over the past few years to contact him and try to set things straight, but he's avoided the issue to the point of trying to pretend that the Misfits, as well as Bobby Steele, never existed. Danzig is more like the Diana Ross of the '90s. Glenn, cut the hype bullshit. You don't need it. Musically, you're a fucking genius.
Bobby Steele
formerly of the Misfits
New Milford, New Jersey

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OPERA OF THE PHANTOMS

Poison-penned illustrator Ralph Steadman has found another outlet for critiquing the state of modern society. His new opera tells it like it is.

Ralph Steadman is perched on the dimly lit choir stairs under the Bell Harry tower in England's Gothic Canterbury Cathedral. At his heels, composer Richard Harvey hauls a full orchestra and choir through a rehearsal of Steadman's new opera, *The Plague and the Moonflower*.

Steadman is best known for his rabid work as the graphic eye of writer Hunter S. Thompson—a coeval collaboration that began with a piece called "The Kentucky Derby Is Decadent and Depraved" for *Scanlan's Monthly* in 1970. Their work not only became the definition of gonzo journalism, but also quickly established Steadman's poisonous graphic style as one of the most influential of any illustrator in the last quarter century.

As a projectionist flashes Steadman's paintings onto a huge screen, it's clear there is still a lunacy in his work the same lunacy that left people with the urge to wipe Nixon off the planet after reading Thompson's *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail, 1972*. All of Steadman's own books make folks feel an unnatural discomfort about themselves; the most recent is a deserved reaming of late capitalism titled *America*. He has long been depressed by the blather and smoke of politicians but has increasingly found it a waste of his time to answer them in specific.

"Politicians know too well how to manipulate the press," he explains. "Why give them any credit or critique them as humans? They've been reduced to bureaucratic caricatures. And the more vicious the cartoonist becomes, the more they like it because they realize they're important."

In 1988, Steadman was asked to do a poster for the Exeter Arts Festival and was subsequently drawn into a musical project with British film-score composer Richard Harvey and Segovia guitar prodigy John Williams. Steadman painted the backdrops and wrote the text for the opera, addressing the criminally toxic state of our planet. As a symbol of threatened purity, he chose the rare moonflower. As its opposite, he invented the Plague Demon.

"The Plague Demon represents the dark side of our souls," says Steadman. "Corporate interests and our appetites keep getting in the way of progress."

"We have to shut down the twentieth century and look back upon it as a bad dream," he explains. "In the twenty-first century the only place we have left on this earth to grow is inside—in our minds. We can't continue saying every family can have six cars and plenty of deodorant and all the shit society says they really need. Only when we're choking to death will we do something. The only thing that really motivates people is when they realize, 'My God! It's in my backyard now! There's an oil slick in my pond! When I turn the tap on, oil comes out!' Or filth or something—pure *greed* comes out."

DEAN KUIPERS

Far right, top and bottom: Ralph Steadman's environmental illustrations from his opera *The Plague and the Moonflower*; *middle:* London's Canterbury Cathedral in full operatic glory.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID McINTYRE

CLOSE READINGS

Lyrics often say much more than you'd think at first listen. Here's a deep analysis of a few meaningful lines.

SONG AND ARTIST	QUESTIONABLE LYRIC	AUTHORIAL INTENT
"One in a Million," Guns N' Roses	"Immigrants and faggots make no sense to me / They come to this country, think they can do as they please / Like start some mini-Iran, or spread some fucking disease."	Those who have cultural or sexual perspectives we cannot understand are nonetheless welcome here and entitled to life, liberty, and adequate health care.
"____ tha Police," N.W.A	"Fuck tha police."	Law-enforcement officers need our affection as well as our cooperation if they are to perform their societal function properly.
"You Light Up My Life," Debby Boone	"You light up my life / You give me hope to carry on."	You bring me to orgasm, which is the only thing keeping me from putting a shotgun in my mouth.

BEN METCALF

Dear Elvis,

I think the frivolous use of animal fur in your Jungle Room in Graceland is sick. Are you a friend of the animals, or an enemy?
Mike Royer
Richmond, Kentucky

Dear Mike,
I just flat-footed will not stand for no kind of cruelty to animals. I'll admit I had to smack some sense into a dog the other day, but the damn thing had a hold of my leg with his teeth and wouldn't let go for nothing. Back when I fixed up my house, I was ignorant of some of the facts I know now, such as that they have to kill something like four or five cute little critters just to get about a square inch of fur. It's downright sinful. But I don't see no use in pulling all that pretty stuff down out of Graceland, because them particular animals have been dead as doornails for a hell of a long time now. You can bet when that deceitful fur salesman comes a-knocking at my door next time, though, I'll give him a walloping he won't forget.
Shout it out loud,
Elvis

ILLUSTRATION BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS

COP ROCK

"I see the essence of rock'n'roll as one generation's destroying what came before," says Cop Shoot Cop singer Tod A. "But that hasn't happened for a long while, and that's why the contemporary scene is moribund. Why be a '60s or '70s rehash? Why not try to recognize the time you're living in?"

Cop Shoot Cop is the antithesis of what normally passes for college rock. Where the latter dreams wistfully of an early American "golden age," Cop Shoot Cop draws on the wired energies of today's urban life. Where college rock dedicates itself to carrying on noble, guitarsmith traditions, Cop Shoot Cop embraces new technologies. With a decidedly nongeneric format—no guitar, two basses, a sampler, and Einstürzende Neubauten–like scrap-metal percussion—this band would rather face the future, however nightmarish, than seek shelter in the back pages of rock history.

"We don't want to be known as a sampler band," insists bassist Natz. "But the sampler is a new tool for expression. It's crazy that so few bands have responded to its potential, because it's almost impossible to do anything new with the guitar."

Cop Shoot Cop's members hate "guitar wank," and they detest the drugged-out inertia of nouveau hippie audiences. Their stimulant of choice is "speed": not the illicit chemical, but rather the tempo of the 20th century as it hurtles on a collision course towards the new millennium. Their response to the apocalyptic acceleration of our "panic culture" is survivalist discipline.

"We're vomiting back all the garbage—the stuff that passes for culture—that the media shove down our throats," Tod says, explaining the title of Cop Shoot Cop's debut album, *Consumer Revolt*. "It's a revolt like in-your-stomach revolting. Everything now is preprocessed and predigested.

"We're hip to the fact that we're just packaged rebellion," Tod continues. "We know we're supposed to represent some kind of antiestablishment edge, and we want to mess around with that. It's impossible not to have a sense of irony if you're in a rock'n'roll band now. At least it's better than apathy. Most people we know just do drugs and try to forget. We bait people, berate them for what they're doing with their lives. Being in a band is just about the right degree of commitment before it gets too absurd. If we really had any political aspirations, we'd be blowing things up."

SIMON REYNOLDS

Just when you think you know what it is... It's MTV. By artist Robert Yarber.

MTV MUSIC TELEVISION One in a series

HEAVY ROTATION

STAFF SELECTIONS

Throwing Muses *The Real Ramona* (Sire). The Rhode Island quartet returns with another batch of its peculiar, disjointed pop. Haunting melodies, mesmerizing rhythms, and soul-searching lyrics intertwine to create the Muses' usual upbeat-but-downbeat brand of euphony. And three of them are girls, too. (Blackwell)

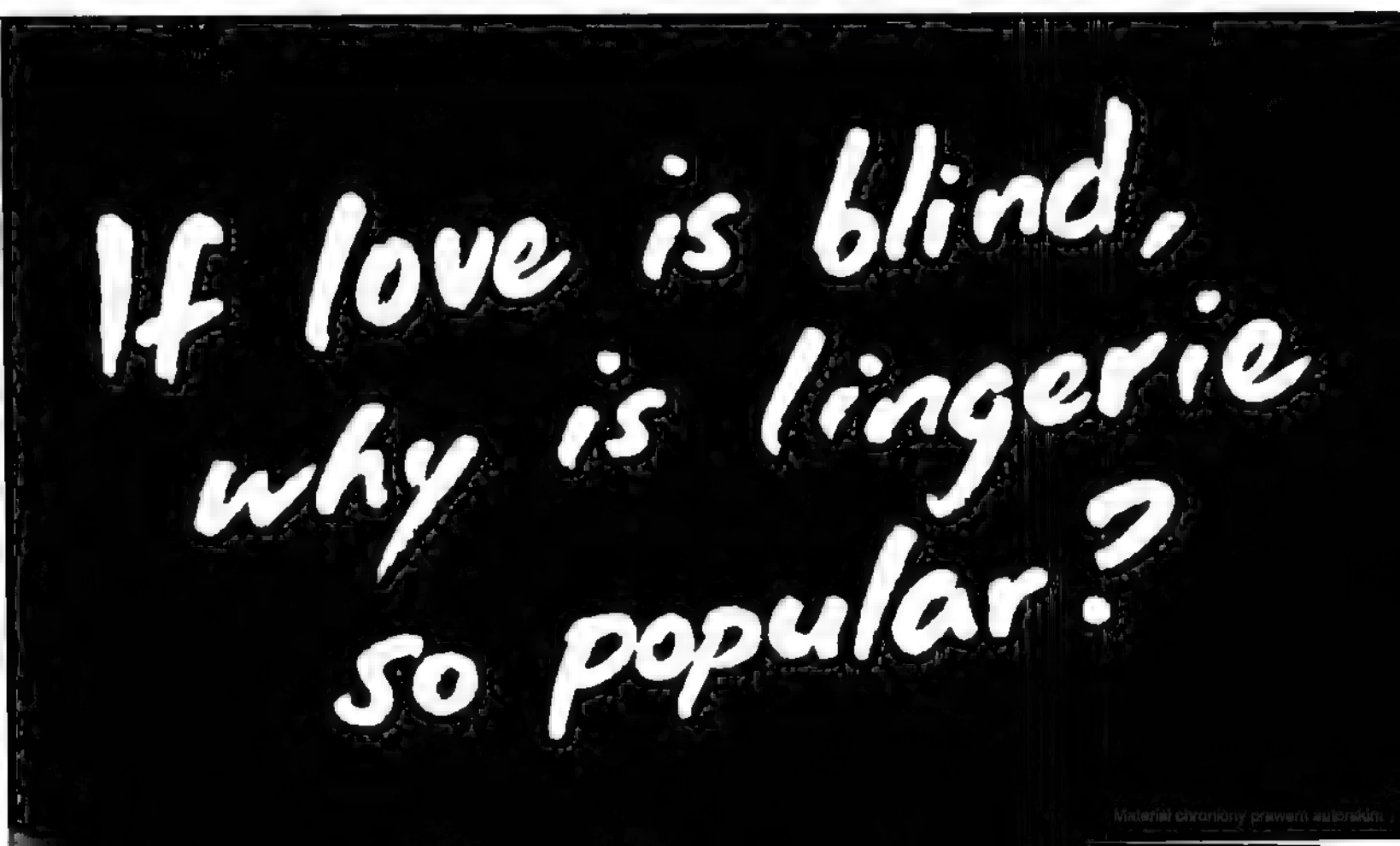
Poster Children *Daisy Chain Reaction* (Twin Tone). Furious, loud, sometimes funky alternative music with enough riffs, rhythms, and melodies to accompany anyone in need of a good thoughtful road trip. This tight Champaign, Illinois, band sparks new hope for the once famous "Chicago" sound. Definitely not your average wall decoration. (Fidler)

Tav Falco's Panther Burns *Return of the Blue Panther* (Triple X). Panther Burns has never been a fashionable outfit, though its raucous brand of psychobilly has garnered the band a steadily growing cult over the years. *Return* is their first domestic record in some time, and while it's not as good as vintage Tav, it's well worthy of your attention. (Greer)

EPMD *Business As Usual* (Def Jam/RAL/Columbia). Hip hop's rap brokers hit the trading floor with bold beats and broad science. Sampling and scratching '70s-smooth disco grooves, EPMD sells a pseudo-streetwise mix of heartfelt misogyny, homophobia, and profanity—seasoned with a pinch of eloquent black consciousness. A double-edged blade, but at least it's sharp. (Foege)

The Throbs *The Language of Thieves and Vagabonds* (DGC). With a singer named Sweetheart who sounds anything but, this New York City outfit snarls, struts, and sweats through an hour of highly infectious rock'n'roll in the best tradition of sleazy barroom bands. Worth taking up as a second language. (Spencer)

Drivin' 'n' Cryin' *Fly Me Courageous* (Island). After lead singer Kevn Kinney's laid-back acoustic side project with Peter Buck, much of this hard drivin' follow-up set comes off sounding downright heavy metal. By far the band's most cohesive and listenable effort to date. Southern rockin' good news. (Blackwell)



HAPPY DAZE

Happy Mondays have found great commercial success with their sloppy brand of funky beats, dreamy synths, and singsong vocals, receiving more adulation from the British press than any band since the Smiths. The group was one of the primary catalysts of the Manchester dance-rock scene, which began in 1987 with the importation of Ecstasy and the staging of touchy-feely, all-night "raves."

"Bands really had nothing to do with it, though," says lead singer Shaun Ryder about Manchester's late-'80s heydays. "There was just more Ecstasy there than anywhere else. The police never busted anybody 'cause everyone was just dancing. They'd let you have parties in abandoned buildings as long as there was no trouble."

But this daydream nation could only last for so long. Today the cops are busting people, the Ecstasy is bad, the scene is dead, and, having secured their place in British pop history, Happy Mondays are looking for new challenges. The band is soon moving to L.A., where it recorded its new album, *Pills 'n' Thrills and Bellyaches*. It will be touring in the States this spring, in hopes of adding mainstream fans to its already strong dance club and college followings.

Ryder, who says he has "dressed the same since 1978," believes that in America "people want something besides average, middle-of-the-road flash rockers." He admits that Happy Mondays has been "overhyped," but insists that "whether you describe the music as acid-y this or smarty-pants that, we're still a good rock band.

Happy Mondays take pride in representing the average Joe "Before we came along most bands went to art college," explains Ryder. "But we're from the other side of town." He describes himself as just a bloke who enjoys watching the odd soccer match and making money.

He sounds like he'll fit right in when he moves to the United States, but Ryder's run into some language barriers. When his American record company asked him to change the line, "Yippie-yippie-ya-ya-yay / I had to crucify some brother today," in the single "Kinky Afro," because "brother" is slang for African-Americans, Ryder refused.

"I remember there was a Mr. Wanker in an episode of *Happy Days*," he says in defense. "And I don't think Americans really knew what that meant to us."

BOB MACK

Happy Mondays are set to win over America

SPIN MUSIC NEWS

THE PEEL SESSIONS

New York's Dutch East India Trading is releasing a series of 60 albums called *The Peel Sessions* compiled by famed British DJ John Peel. Since joining the BBC's Radio One in 1967, Peel has given the likes of David Bowie, the Smiths, and Sonic Youth their first U.K. exposure.

The collection spans everything from '60s psychedelia (Hendrix) to '70s punk (The Damned) to '80s speed metal (Prong). Initial releases include a compilation called *Manchester—So Much to Answer For* and a full-length Buzzcocks album. The discs draw from thousands of Peel's sessions, each cut exclusively for Radio One in as little as four hours. "There is a really raw quality to all of them," says Peel. "But more conspicuous are bands that are absent. Like Dire Straits and U2. I thought they were crap then; I think they're crap now."

At 51, Britain's pied piper of alternative pop feels there is still a vital underground music scene. "There are so many incredible bands in America right now, like Tar, Surgery, and Babes in Toyland," he says. "And you simply have no idea what's coming next. Therein lies the greatest pleasure of all."

MICHAEL GIRDA

THE CASE OF THE BLOODY STOOLS

According to a representative of Rick Rubin's indie label, Ill, Jon Bon Jovi is allegedly involved in a somewhat mysterious musical side project tentatively titled The Bloody Stools. Details on the raunchy band's lineup remain sketchy and vary depending on whom you talk to. With reported song titles such as "Show Me Your Tits," "Choke the Load," and "Give Head or Die," this is no surprise. Doc McGhee, Bon Jovi's manager, claims not to be involved in the project, while the singer himself says his voice was sampled. Copies of advance cassettes originally had Jon Bon Jovi's name on them, but all existing copies have reportedly been destroyed per Rubin's request.

"Actually Jon Bon Jovi sings on the album," the Ill representative claims, "but my understanding is that we are not allowed to use his name on this. But you should really see the T-shirts. It's a caricature of two bar stools that have blood dripping out of them."

Other band members are said to be Skid Row's Dave "The Snake" Sabo and Bon Jovi's Richie Sambora. Scott McGhee, Skid Row's manager and admitted Stool representative, describes the band as "really funny stuff, really powerful. But Johnny [Bon Jovi], I don't know about. Johnny's not on it. I think Richie might have played a little part, but I don't think he was on it either."

According to the band's press release: "Like a mad zoo keeper, Rick Rubin continues to unlock the cages of America's wildest immoral animals." Whether Jon Bon Jovi is one of these animals has yet to be determined and may never be.

DANIEL FIDLER

Concert victims, *from far left*: Liz Glausi with roommate, Curtis Child, and Jimmie Boyd, Jr. *Above*: Kids caught in the crush.

Death by General Admission

When thousands of AC/DC fans rushed the stage of Salt Lake City's Salt Palace during the band's opening number on January 18, at least 30 people were caught in a massive crush. Three teenagers—Jimmie Boyd, Jr., and Curtis Child, both 14, and Liz Glausi, 19—died from asphyxiation.

Salt Lake City fire captain Gene Miner, who led attempts to save the teens, has recommended in a letter to the city's Life Safety Bureau that general admission seating be completely banned. He also suggested that fans should be warned before a show that any unruliness will result in security's pulling the plug on the band.

"Maybe if we shut down the concerts, the kids will wise up," he says. "We shouldn't leave it to the bands' security to make the decision."

Two Salt Palace employees claim that they told AC/DC personnel to stop the show when the fans were injured, but that the band's reaction was slow. Scott Carter, one of the two guards who helped disentangle the mess of bodies, said it took the band more than half an hour to stop playing. AC/DC claims it stopped as soon as it was informed of the accident.

Although the deaths in Salt Lake City, which has become a mecca for heavy metal shows, underscored the perils of general admission seating, the potential danger of festival seating has been known since 1979, when 11 people were trampled and killed at a Who concert in Cincinnati.

After the Who incident, tighter concert guidelines were enforced across the nation. Only 10 to 20 percent of arenas with a capacity to hold more than 10,000 people now allow general admission, and the ones that do employ much stricter safety procedures including metal detectors and more security guards. (The AC/DC concert at the Salt Palace, which does not limit the size of general admission audiences, drew over 12,000.) To many, these restrictions dampen the spirit of rock'n'roll shows, but according to authorities, that's a small price to pay for safety.

At the funeral of young Jimmie Boyd, Jr., mourners paid their last respects by playing a tape of his favorite song—AC/DC's "Money Talks."

DAVID CLIFTON

BOTTOM RICK EGAN

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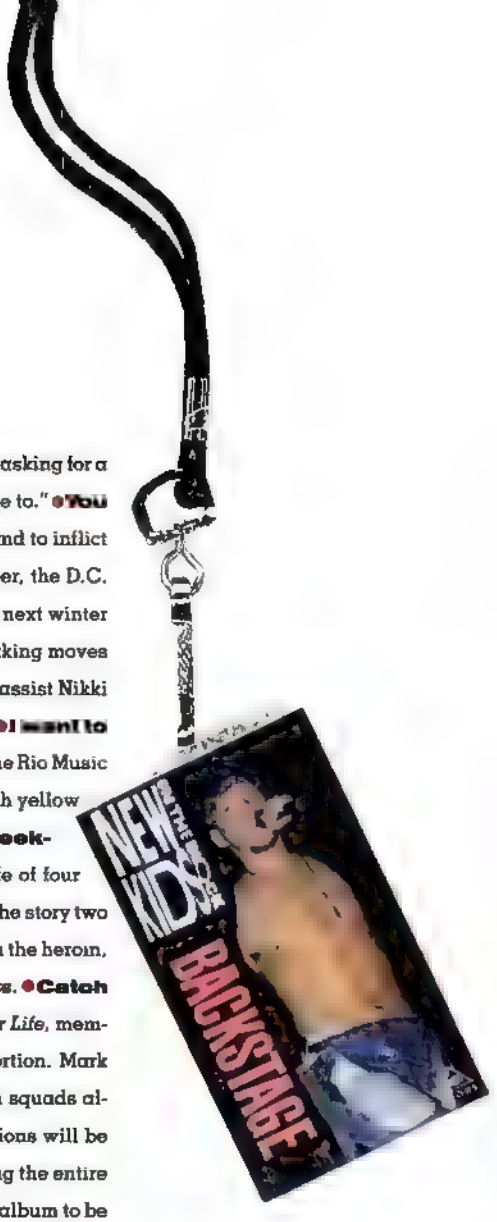
MISSED INFORMATION

Haze of gory: Jon Bon Jovi recently received a letter from a regiment stationed in the Saudi desert asking for a copy of his song "Blaze of Glory." The letter claimed the song's lyrics gave them "something to relate to." ● **You gotta have faith:** Chuck Mosely, ex-front man for Faith No More, has found another hardcore band to inflict himself upon—this time it's the Bad Brains. With the latest departure of H.R. to pursue a solo career, the D.C. reggae hardcore group are heading back into the studio with Chuck. An album is due out sometime next winter on Atlantic. Rumor has it that *present* Faith No More vocalist Mike Patton and Mariah Carey are making moves toward each other ● **Babes in Tattooland:** Gunner Sixx is the newest addition to Mötley Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx's family, born January 25. Nikki is seriously looking for an appropriate tattoo for the little dude. ● **I want to be alone and nearly was:** George Michael drew a disappointing crowd for his appearance at the Rio Music Festival and exercised some crowd control of his own by lining the outside of his dressing room with yellow police tape, causing the festival's security staff to dub him "Saint George." ● **Seeking a replacement:** The Replacements' Paul Westerberg has left his wife of four years, Laurie. ● **Hey, at least wait until the second album:** Much like the story two years ago that Axl Rose was dead of an overdose and Slash in jail for giving him the heroin, rumors of Dee-Lite's Lady Kier overdosing have proven to be just that—rumors. ● **Catch of the day:** In a bizarre, ten-minute public service video titled *Champions for Life*, members of Super Bowl champs the New York Giants express their views on abortion. Mark Bavaro catches a pass and then says to the camera, "With the abortion death squads allowed to run rampant through our country, I wonder how many future champions will be killed before they see the light of day." The word "woman" isn't used once during the entire video. ● **Studio:** A Tribe Called Quest is in the studio working on their second album to be distributed by a major label. ● **Where's the recruiting office? I'll go!** War hero and super-patriot Dan Quayle on war protesters: "As expected, there have been some demonstrations against our policy in the Gulf and some American flags have been burned. Unfortunately, the media seem compelled to devote much more attention to those protests than they deserve." ● **Catch them if you can:** Guns N' Roses will begin a tour with Skid Row this spring; the tour kicks off in Wisconsin. ● **Never too old to rock'n' roll:** Robert Rosa, lead singer for the band Maggie's Dream, was in Menudo six years ago. ● **Minor threats:** It has been reported that bomb threats against Slaughter—in part due to the band's name—had forced the band to cancel an upcoming European tour. The truth is the band's manager canceled the tour due to *future* security concerns. ● **I smell a rat:** Berkeley virologist Peter Duesberg, who says HIV is a harmless bug, is fuming after having discovered that one of his most vociferous opponents has a vested financial interest in the HIV-AIDS hypothesis. Robin Weiss, who has written several vicious attacks on Duesberg in *Nature* magazine, evidently holds a patent on HIV tests and works for AZT maker Burroughs Wellcome. Coincidence?



But let me finish the current tour first:
New Kids on the Block's 21-year-old Donnie Wahlberg on the war: "It sucks. People think Hussein is just another bad guy like Qaddafi or Noriega that America can go after. They don't know shit. I understand the Islamic faith, and there's always two sides to everything. But it's all or nothing for me. If I end up having to go, send me to the front lines."

Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane department:
Red Hot Chili Peppers have signed a three-record deal with Warner Bros. for over $6 million. Seattle's Nirvana has signed a three-record deal with DGC for $750,000, an unheard of amount for a new alternative band.

Sub Pop to majors — Drop dead:
"Having invested a lot of time and money and having gone out to dinner with every jackass in the music business, we've said, 'Thanks, but no thanks,' for the time being," says Sub Pop Records co-owner Jon Poneman on the Seattle label's decision to remain independent. "They [the major labels] would flatter us by acting like we were truly the revolutionary business people we thought we were. The fact of the matter is that we already have better-sounding records and better bands than any alternative department that the majors have bothered to set up."

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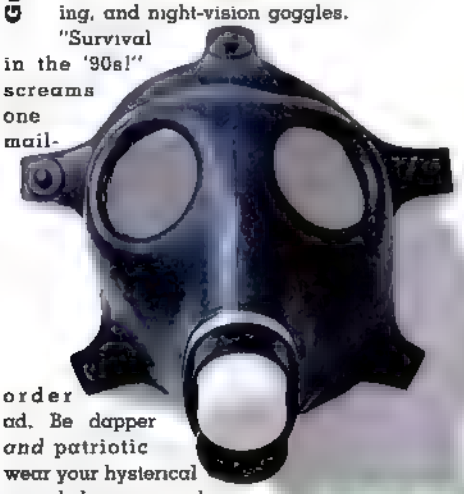
THE COLD ROCK STUFF

THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS

Compiled by Mark Blackwell, Alec Foege, Carlo McCormick, Bob Mack, Mindy Spar, and Lauren Spencer.

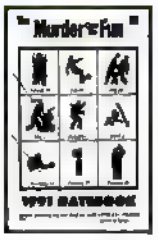
Gulf War Gauche

Fashion foresight means buying early: Hoard khakis and camouflage coats before Ralph Lauren "goes Baghdad." And while you're at it, why not accessorize? New York merchants report record sales for gas masks, bullet-proof clothing, and night-vision goggles. "Survival in the '90s!" screams one mail-order ad. Be dapper *and* patriotic wear your hysterical xenophobia on your sleeve. Gas masks available for $39 each (add $15 for necessary filter) "while supplies last" from *Spytech, Suite 8024, Empire State Building, New York, NY 10118.*



JAMIE BIONDO

Murder Can Be Fun



Sporadic in its release schedule and random in its targets of assault, *Murder Can Be Fun*, the fanzine of killers and their victims, has only one m.o.—violence, death, and murder. Writer John Marr tells us all we'd ever want to know about the people, places, and events that make this world so vile and mortal. Covers the likes of Valerie Solanis, Ted Bundy, Fatty Arbuckle, Typhoid Mary, and Ed Kemper, as well as crime books and magazines, sports scandals, natural and man-made disasters, cannibalism, and anorexia. A must. *John Marr, Box 604111, San Francisco, CA 90419.*

Ted Nugent's World Bowhunters magazine

In this time of heightened planetary awareness, Ted Nugent feels he's doing his part to balance out the animal population by bow hunting. But just doing the deadly deed ain't enough, so the Nuge chronicles the bow-and-arrow sport by publishing a bimonthly magazine called *World Bowhunters*. The mag contains everything from Ted's own hunting itinerary to the Gomer Awards—rebuttals of angry letters from people he calls "animal Nazis and bafoons [sic] in general," or animal-rights activists, as they are more commonly known. Chock-full of articles and ads depicting all creatures great and small, dead and dying—at the mercy of the latest in bow-hunter technology. Kill at will, and read all about it. *$15 per year, P.O. Box 763, Grand Haven, MI 49417.*

Chia Pets

They're back! Capitalizing on the '70s nostalgia craze, Chia Pets are fast becoming the Sea Monkeys of the '90s. These ceramic animal figures grow sprouts in place of fur when plastered with a special seed mixture. Although the TV commercials use time-lapse photography to suggest the Chia Pet will burst into green before your eyes, the process actually takes a few days. A variety of Chia Pets are available, including puppies, kittens, and rams; for those with limited imaginations, there is even a Chia Tree.

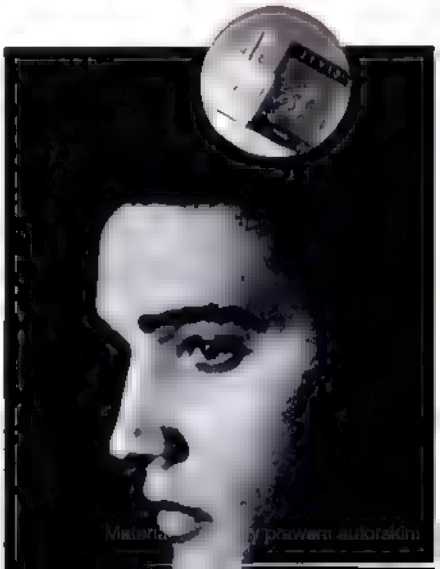
CHIA PET ILLUSTRATION BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS

Nite With a Lava Lite

For those hard-core lava lamp addicts who just can't get enough of the real thing, here's an hour-long video starring 15 of the colorful beauties. Watch enraptured as each lamp seductively flows and bubbles along to a sound track of 17 cheesy dance, ballad, and metal tunes. Just try to stay in your seat when the lovely torso of Demetra, the "Lava Lady," appears periodically to rearrange the lamps and stroke them suggestively. Throw in a strobe light, a smoke machine, and some bubbles, and you've got an instant music video party. We dare you to hit fast forward. *$16.95 plus $2.50 shipping/handling to Megapop Production Co., P.O. Box 124, Hampton Bays, NY 11946.*

Elvis Cologne

The aptly named Trend Media, Inc., launched Elvis Cologne on what "would have been —or was (depending which side of the fence you sit on)—the King's 56th birthday." At $19.50 a pop, the cologne, which TV ads say is "for all the King's men," is selling faster than copies of the *Enquirer*. The cologne's creator, Irwin Goldberg, was also the man behind the famous '60s Joe Namath ads for Brut, Elvis's own favorite scent. "You walk into a room with Brut on and *pow*!" says Goldberg. "But Elvis is much more subtle."



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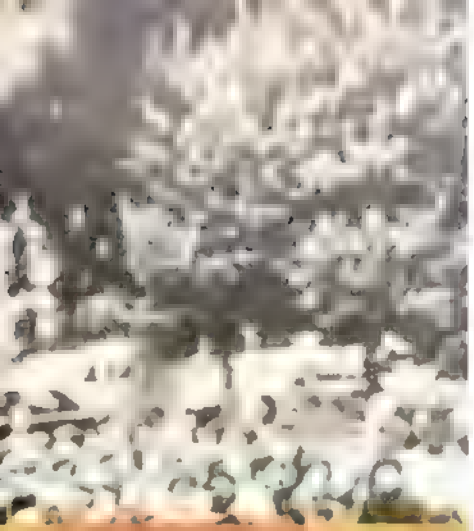


WHY HENDRIX STILL MATTERS

Jimi Hendrix died a couple of decades ago, right? So what makes him—now more than ever—the perfect icon for our age, the multicultural '90s?

FRANK OWEN and SIMON REYNOLDS explain.

White-collared conservative flashing down the street / Pointing their plastic finger at me / They're hoping soon my kind will drop and die / But I'm gonna wave my freak flag high.
—from "If 6 Was 9"

DURING THE RECORDING OF JIMI HENDRIX'S FIRST SESSION FOR RADIO ONE, BRITAIN'S national pop radio station, the BBC engineers were troubled by the sounds emanating from the young guitarist's amp, having no reason to think that this was anything other than a normal item for what was then known as "light entertainment." In the end, the producer had to speak his mind: "Look, Jimi, we seem to be getting quite a bit of distortion and feedback and can't seem to correct it." Jimi, forgive them, for they know not what they say.

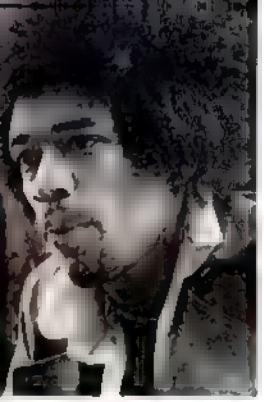
In the shoot-'em-up cop thriller *Shakedown*, Peter Weller (of *Robocop* fame) plays a lawyer trapped in a loveless yuppie relationship who enjoys blasting "Purple Haze" at the breakfast table. His soon-to-be wife enters and asks him to turn that "heavy metal" off. "This isn't heavy metal," says an exasperated Weller. "This is Hendrix." Jimi, forgive them, for they know not what they say.

In a recent *High Times* article titled "Who Killed Jimi Hendrix?" (it was the FBI, allegedly), John Holmstrom recounts the story of a group of students in Ridgefield, Connecticut, who signed a petition demanding that a Hendrix mural on their high school walls be painted over because the late guitarist was a symbol of drug abuse. Luckily, the school principal refused, saying, "I hesitate to accept that Jimi Hendrix's life and work can or should be condensed into 'He is a symbol of drug abuse.' " Jimi, forgive them once more, for they know not what they say.

Historical revisionism and the endless stream of tired imitators that followed in his wake sometimes makes it difficult to appreciate what a radical listening experience the music of Jimi Hendrix was and still is. Yet for those with the ears to hear, his influence is everywhere in contemporary rock.

In the Stone Roses and their guitarist John Squire's polychromatic action-painting style of playing. In My Bloody Valentine, a group which has worked with Roger Mayer, the guy who invented effects boxes and distortion pedals for Hendrix. In Loop's noise symphonies. In Sonic

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM STAR FILE



Youth, whose unusual tunings would not have been possible without Hendrix's reinvention of the guitar. (Drummer Buddy Miles, who played with Hendrix, recorded an album called *Expressway to Your Skull* in 1968. Nineteen years later Sonic Youth recorded a song with the same name.)

In the wah-wah heaven of Dinosaur Jr. In the raga free-form folkadelic blitz of Hüsker Dü's "Recurring Dreams" on *Zen Arcade*. In the wigged out, apocalyptic, nouveau acid rock of the Butthole Surfers. (Think of their "Jimi" as a fin de siècle version of Hendrix's "Third Stone From the Sun.") In the oceanic rock of A.R. Kane. In the black rock of Living Colour and 24-7 Spyz. In the thrashing metal-funk of the Red Hot Chili Peppers (who covered Hendrix's "Fire" and inherited his febrile hypersexuality and imitated his bad-ass virility). Not to mention obvious examples like Prince and George Clinton.

And then there's heavy metal as a genre. If Hendrix paved the way for this music, it was because he showed that the blues could be blown up from a porch-side lament into a mountain range. Hendrix invented the "air guitar," not in the sense of an imaginary instrument played by hair farmers in front of their bedroom mirrors, but rather in the sense of a guitar that refused to be bound solely by earthly roots, a sound that grew wings and took flight. An aerial guitar, if you will.

The Hendrix influence on rap is also profound, and not just in the way that boho homeboys like De la Soul and A Tribe Called Quest dress. Hendrix samples on rap records include Digital Underground's "Who Knows?" the Beastie Boys' "B-Boy Bouillabaisse," A Tribe Called Quest's "Go Ahead in the Rain," and Monie Love's "Just Don't Give a Damn." Moreover, every rap use of rock comes via Hendrix, from Run-DMC to Schoolly D. Rap's dissonance is Hendrix's guitar still reverberating and feeding back.

As SPIN colleague Nathaniel Wice puts it: "He dominates both *Yo! MTV Raps* and *Headbanger's Ball*. He fathered both, dominating everything that music has become. Not only won't he die, but it's impossible to imagine how to kill him off."

There's even a case to be made that Hendrix is responsible for that hideous mutant jazz-rock. But we'll pass discreetly over that, except to mention Hendrix's profound influence on Miles Davis's brilliant late-'60s and early-'70s work.

Jim Morrison may be the subject of Hollywood mythmaking, but Hendrix is not a corpse to be resurrected. Hendrix is the living, breathing soul of today's rock'n'roll.

Everybody likes Jimi because they think his cock is bigger than theirs.

—Eric Burdon

There was a local rock radio station I used to listen to all the time, and late at night on the anniversary of Hendrix's death they were playing some Hendrix music and the DJ said that Hendrix was black, but that the music didn't sound very black to him.

—Vernon Reid, as quoted in Charles Shaar Murray's Crosstown Traffic

I wish they had electric guitars in cotton fields back in the good ol' days. A whole lot of things would have been straightened out. Not just only for the black and white, but for the cause.

—Jimi Hendrix

INITIALLY FRAMED WITHIN TRADITIONAL WHITE IDEAS OF WHAT black music meant (black as incarnation of the id, unrepression, instinct, the body, soul, et cetera), Jimi Hendrix was nicknamed the "Wild Man of Pop" and compared to a Borneo savage. As critic Steven Perry has pointed out, such noble savage stereotypes have been used historically to undermine the aesthetic achievements of blacks. Hendrix is interesting because of the damage he did to such racial stereotypes. He wanted to transcend the borders and barriers between races, male and female, and even (at his most mystic) to transcend the human condition all together to become star child, to become male mermaid (as on "1983/A Merman I Should Turn to Be"). Indeed his whole career can be seen as an attempt to reconcile and/or explode such standard oppositions as black versus white, male versus female, the dandy versus the savage, voodoo (the blues) versus Christian salvation (soul), roots versus rootlessness, earthy versus cosmic, tradition versus avant-garde, bohemian art rock versus funk/soul razzmatazz.

Setting himself against the narrow conceptual biases of what constituted "real" black music, Hendrix transformed and transcended the limits of what a black musician could and should be. Among the first, if not *the* first, African-Americans in pop to lay claim to the status of artist rather than entertainer, he did his apprenticeship in soul review bands (most notably the Isley Brothers, Little Richard, and Curtis Knight and the Squires) on the "chitlin circuit," but chafed at the strictures, discipline, and show-biz protocols that were expected of him. Hendrix opened up the possibility for black musicians to be—imagewise and soundwise—messy and self-indulgent. In this he was the polar opposite of James Brown, disciplinarian band leader and the professional servant of a popular audience. In contrast, Hendrix was an aural aristocrat with musical laws unto himself—a solar flare with solo flair, a quality that got him kicked out of many soul bands before his eventual success in the U.K. For his efforts, he was branded a psychedelic Uncle Tom. A more unjust accusation in the history of rock criticism is difficult to imagine.

Yet many of his more fervent supporters seem to add fuel to this charge. Alvin Lee from Ten Years After once said, "Hendrix wasn't black or white. Hendrix was Hendrix." Hendrix was Hendrix, but Hendrix was black.

The endless stream of tired imitators sometimes makes it difficult to appreciate what a radical listening experience the music of Jimi Hendrix was and still is.

In his excellent biography of Hendrix, *'Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky*, David Henderson, an award-winning African-American poet, does a convincing job of debunking the misperception that Hendrix was an Uncle Tom who played exclusively to white audiences. Recalling a meeting between a group of blacks and Hendrix at TTG Studios in Hollywood, Henderson tells how the guitarist expressed concern about the lack of any black support for his music. Not so, said his fellow black musicians. Blacks did buy his records and go to his concerts, but they were rendered virtually invisible by the overwhelming popularity of Hendrix among the mass white audience.

What was true was that black radio did not play his records. Since so much of black radio was white-controlled at that time, that's hardly Hendrix's fault. Moreover, when he jettisoned his all-white band, the Experience, for the all-black Band of Gypsys, it was met with much resistance from his management. But the suspicion still lingers that Hendrix was a disgrace to the race, especially in his refusal to become too closely aligned with black revolutionary movements. Hendrix was a pacifist who refused to give the Black Panthers the explicit gesture of support that they expected from him and got from other entertainers. But as Robert Wyatt, ex-drummer and vocalist with Soft Machine, says, Hendrix didn't "have to go around making political statements. . . . he was living a political life of great importance."

Hendrix didn't need to comment on the issues of the times, racial or not, because the times were in his music. For instance, Hendrix was the soundtrack to Vietnam, for soldiers and for civilians alike. Both "Machine Gun" and his version of "The

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Star-Spangled Banner" are among the most profound works of American art ever made about the war. Vernon Reid once admitted to having mistakenly thought that Hendrix had served in Vietnam. And for the movie version of the real thing (*Apocalypse Now*), Francis Ford Coppola employed Randy Hansen, a Hendrix impersonator, for the soundtrack.

In *'Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky*, Henderson tells of the time in 1969 that Hendrix played a Harlem street fair. Hosted by a popular local radio DJ Eddie O-Jay (ironically another black DJ who didn't play Hendrix's records), Jimi performed "Voodoo Chile," among other songs, which he referred to onstage as "Harlem's national anthem." And of course in a way Hendrix was right. With its explicit evocation and celebration of the supernatural powers and magical transformations at the heart of African religion, "Voodoo Chile" is at least as "black" (if such distinctions are important to you) as James Brown's "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud." So much for Uncle Tom.

After Hendrix finished his show, he was approached by a black nationalist who said, "Hey brother, you better come home." Hendrix replied, "You gotta do what you gotta do, and I gotta do what I got to do *now*."

BORN IN SEATTLE, A CITY NOT KNOWN FOR ITS BLACK CULTURE, Hendrix's racial makeup—black and Native American—combined two homeland-less, exiled traditions in one. He joined the 101st Airborne and traveled to Kentucky where he absorbed the local blues. After leaving the Air Force, he hitchhiked to Nashville and became a professional R&B sideman touring the South. He eventually ended up in Harlem but became attracted to the West Village's burgeoning boho scene, where he was first exposed to the British blues rock of the Yardbirds, the folky lyricism of Bob Dylan, and the new jazz of Roland Kirk, John Coltrane, and Ornette Coleman. Here he discovered acid for the first time, traditionally regarded by blacks as a white man's drug.

Discovered by Chas Chandler, the manager of the Animals, Hendrix was exported to England, where the blues were an exotic taste rather than a lived experience. He was immediately adopted by the British rock aristocracy, which lionized him as both an alien and the authentic R&B article. Returning to America, he was initially sold as an English pop star. At the height of his success, he was constantly on the move, crisscrossing the Atlantic, usually stoned, to fulfill an absurdly packed touring schedule.

In this period he was eight miles high in both senses of the phrase, sometimes experiencing a mystical calm amid the perpetual motion, as on his journey from London to Monterey where he made his American festival debut, the first step toward becoming a major star in his own country. Traveling but never arriving like a black beatnik, the only place he could stand still and just be was onstage or in the recording studio, which perhaps explains why *Electric Ladyland* took so long to record, lost as he was in his own inner space.

One of his favorite metaphors for his music was "taking people on a trip." On "Spanish Castle Magic" he sang, "It's very far away / Takes the better part of a day / To get there / If we travel by—dragonfly." He was a cosmonaut in his own mind, obsessed with extraterrestrial travel. On "Voodoo Chile" and "Third Stone From the Sun" he imagined himself as the brother from another planet—lines like "May I land my kinky machine?" anticipate Clinton's P-Funk Mothership.

He died in London, after the debacle of the Isle of Wight festival (Britain's answer to Woodstock), 6,000 miles from home.

Jimi Hendrix lived a life in exile, which he saw as both a predicament and a privilege. He beautifully caught his ambivalence toward his own wanderlust when he said, "If I'm free it's 'cause I'm always running," and when he wrote lyrics such as, "I got stoned and I can't go home / I'm calling long distance on a public saxophone" (from "Midnight Lightning").

Nomadic by nature, but given to homesickness, he once said, "I'd like to have my own country, an oasis for the Gypsy-minded people. My goal is to erase all boundaries from the world."

The image of Hendrix as "a shooting star, streaming across the sky . . . with neither ancestors nor offspring" is a myth that Charles Shaar Murray aims to demolish in his book *Crosstown Traffic*, and with admirable scholarship he puts Hendrix in his place (repotting his roots, as it were) at the intersection of various black music traditions, most notably those of blues, soul, and jazz. In the process, he provides a useful corrective to those who see Hendrix as an honorary white. But as Nietzsche put it: "It is the sure sign of the death of a religion when its mythic presuppositions become systematized into a ready sum of historical events, and when people begin timidly defending the veracity of myth, but at the same time resist its natural continuance—when the feeling for myth withers and its place is taken by a religion claiming historical foundations." In other words, Murray the historian is absolutely correct, yet misses the point. The myth of Hendrix is why he's remembered—precisely as a bolt from the blue, a comet—and his premature death is in a sense fortuitous, making Hendrix's image stand out more sharply than if he'd waxed and waned for another 20 years.

It is true, in one sense, that he was faithful to the blues. (Murray gives the example of Hendrix's musical onomatopoeia: "Where his blues precursors used their instruments to mimic the sounds of trains and animals of the urban clamor of police sirens and traffic jams, Hendrix reproduced bombs and riots air raids and helicopters, exploding buildings and screeching tires.") In another sense Hendrix was faithless to the blues, departing from the blues-print into noise.

Hendrix was the first environmental guitarist, the inventor of rock's first truly 3-D music. Hendrix replaced rock as riff with rock as radiation.

Attempts to make Hendrix too worthy merely diminish his genius, reducing him to the level of Robert Cray, Jeff Healey, Eric Clapton, and the late Stevie Ray Vaughan, whose earnest veneration of the root music varnishes the blues, in effect turning it into a reproduction antique.

IN 1975 ROCK'S BIGGEST EGGHEAD, BRIAN ENO, REFERRED TO HENdrix as "probably still the greatest guitar player of all time." Eno wasn't talking about Hendrix's guitar-god virtuosity: "He was the first guitar player to realize that guitar was more than a piece of wood that hung around his neck, and he really understood that there was a relationship between the room acoustics and the amplifier he was using, the whole situation."

Beyond the instrumental showmanship (setting fire to the guitar with lighter fluid, playing it with his teeth, smashing it into smithereens), Hendrix was the first environmental guitarist, the inventor of rock's first truly 3-D music. Before Hendrix, rock was a matter of tunnel space. The guitar distinctly positioned coming at you from one particular direction. Hendrix replaced rock as riff with rock as radiation. His guitar comes at you from all sides: behind you, from inside you, through you. It's a Sensurround sound that permeates the listener's flesh.

WHY SHOULD SPIN, A MAGAZINE SUPPOSEDLY DEVOTED TO ALL that is new and cutting-edge in popular culture, feature Jimi Hendrix on its cover? Surely, in remembering a figure such as Hendrix, we are colluding with the CD consciousness/retroculture to be found in magazines such as *Rolling Stone*.

continued on page 106

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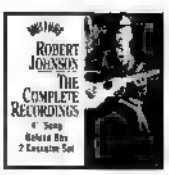

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the 6 greatest rock'n' roll stories ever told

One of the saddest facts about rock'n'roll today is that artists spend so much of their lives mythologizing themselves to the absurd far reaches of blandness. In these times of video mass-fantasy, rock stars go to great lengths to bleach out their imperfections until only their dizzying brilliance is left. History is revised, awkward facts are banished, and Vanilla Ice really did hang out with Miami street gangs.

So, in interviews we hear that their early days were "fine"; getting their first record deal was "the plan coming together"; success and adulation are all part of a "job well done." To listen to rock stars talk these days is often to hear nothing more than boring inanities.

But we at SPIN have dedicated our lives (or at least our lunch hours) to cutting through the whitewash and bringing you those honest anecdotes that express the true attitude and texture of rock'n'roll. Those stories that express the exuberant belligerence, humor, joy, and tragedy among the chaos, noise, hysteria, and insanity that is rock'n'roll.

In honor of our 6th anniversary issue we have collected what we believe to be the 6 GREATEST ROCK AND ROLL STORIES EVER TOLD. So relax, get comfy, and come with us as we follow the SEX PISTOLS on their fateful first and last American tour; travel with ELVIS PRESLEY on his jaunt to the White House to meet President Nixon; journey back to the early days of criminal-minded rap in the Bronx with GRANDMASTER FLASH; relive the tragedy of BOBBY FULLER's death and the mystery of who killed him; and return to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where MADONNA is a waitress in a pizza parlor. We end with the bizarre tale of Chris Dickinson, impersonator of ex-KISS DRUMMER PETER CRISS, proving that rock'n'roll is still more at home in the pages of the *Weekly World News* than it will ever be in the pages of the *New York Times*. Good readin' and rockin' tonight.

— LEGS McNEIL

NO FUN:

On Tour With the Sex Pistols

Anything you can do we can do dangerously The Sex Pistols first and last American tour.

THE SEX PISTOLS arrived at JFK airport on January 3, 1978, as strangers in a strange land. As far as their American label Warner Bros. was concerned, the Sex Pistols were full-fledged rock-stars-to-be, even though they didn't have a U.S. hit and the planned tour was decidedly unconventional. Instead of playing major centers like New York and Los Angeles, the Sex Pistols were to play the northern industrial cities like Cleveland and Pittsburgh before swinging through the Deep South.

Bad signs hung over the tour from the start: The northern dates were canceled when the group's drug and violence convictions prevented them from getting entry visas. Heavy lobbying of the State Department by Warner Bros. eventually guaranteed entry. Now the group had a nine-day trip through six states in mid-winter, accompanied by a media circus as well as FBI agents and local sheriffs, alerted by the Pistols' scandalous reputation.

There to protect them—not only from the authorities but from themselves—were Noel Monk and his three security men. This drove a wedge into the Sex Pistols' tightly knit world; bunkered in the U.K. after a sequence of attacks and press overkill, the group saw hardly anybody outside their inner circle of about a dozen people. Now they were surrounded by strangers whose job it was to fend off the multiple crazies attracted by the group's violent, cartoonish image.

Within 24 hours, the severity of the situation became apparent. Not only were members of the group estranged from each other and their manager, but their bassist, Sid Vicious, was going through cold turkey withdrawal from a severe heroin habit. Although the music industry allows all manner of excess provided that it is part of the act, with the Sex Pistols in general, and Sid Vicious in particular, it wasn't: He looked uncontrollable, and was. From day one of the tour, he went for oblivion.

It took only a couple of disappearances—after the first concert in Atlanta, the next day in Memphis—for the band's security team to realize that Sid was a problem. To keep him in line, they beat him up, and, after he intentionally gashed his arm to the bone with a hunting knife, they never let him out of their sight. Frequently, he was handcuffed. Treated like a child, Sid regressed even further, much to the disgust of the rest of the group.

If John Lydon, as Johnny Rotten, was used to being the undisputed head of the group, he soon found that Sid was upstaging him. America responds not to irony, but to the loud, simple shapes which Rotten was not prepared to throw; as the other member of the group with the funny name, Sid Vicious was. When the big confrontation that McLaren had been expecting took place at San Antonio's Randy Rodeo, it was Sid who went all the way—taunting the audience with insults such as "You cowboys are all faggots," and, when the cowboys disagreed physically, clubbing one with his bass.

The more Sid acted up, the more Rotten withdrew. The more Rotten withdrew, the more Sid hogged the limelight in the only way he knew: the headlong rush to self-destruction inspired by his idol, the Stooges-era Iggy Pop.

At the Longhorn Ballroom in Dallas, he took the stage, with only one string on his bass and GIMME written on his chest. He soon amended this to GIMME A FIX. When L.A. punk Helen Killer head-butted Sid on the nose (she had traveled several hundred miles to do this), he let the blood flow all over his face and chest. For the finisher, he broke a bottle and gouged his chest.

By now, the group had effectively split. Steve Jones and Paul Cook were now flying to dates with McLaren, leaving Sid and John on the tour bus with the gun-toting hippies and photographers Joe Stevens and Bob Gruen. Vicious's behavior was becoming so extreme that, like a living poltergeist, he created disturbance wherever he went.

On the way to Tulsa, around 3:00 A.M., Bob Gruen suggested to Sid that they get something to eat. According to Gruen, "Some cowboy is sitting there with his family and they start talking with Sid, who sits at their table with his steak and scrambled eggs. The guy says, 'Sid Vicious? If you're so tough, can you do this?' He stubs his cigarette out in the palm of his hand.

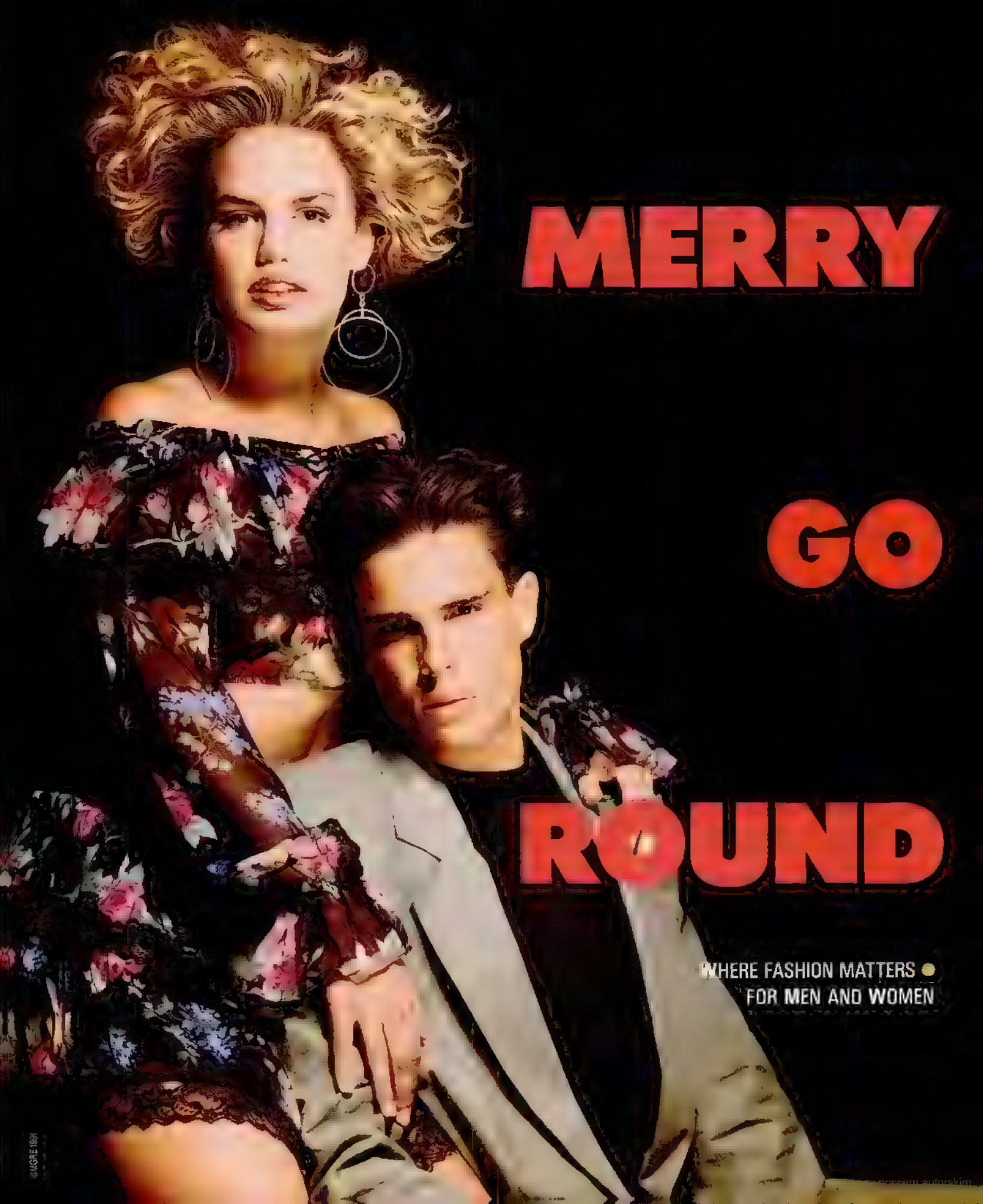
"Sid says, 'Yeah.' He cuts his hand, and the blood drips onto the plate with the steak and he keeps on eating. The guy grabs his wife and kid and leaves the restaurant screaming about how weird Sid is."

The rest is legend. The Sex Pistols play their last date in San Francisco: Sid plays stoned; Cook and Jones grimly take care of business; John Lydon slips out of his role as Johnny Rotten while he's singing. "No fun," he intones on the encore, and he's not talking about nihilism but his own situation on stage. The next day, Sid OD's in a shooting gallery on the corner of Haight and Ashbury: Now the tour is over, Noel Monk isn't watching over him anymore. The following day, the Sex Pistols break up acrimoniously.

Sid, having been being brought back to life by a Marin County acupuncturist, flies back to New York with minder John Tiberi. Given some methadone to last him until his return to the U.K., he takes it all at once with some Valiums as a chaser. He has his second OD in three days and slips into a coma so severe that the next thing he sees is Jamaica Hospital in Queens, New York. It is the 20th of January: for this and the next day, a raging blizzard prevents almost any motion in and out of New York. Sid has never been more alone. **JON SAVAGE**

(This story is condensed from England's Dreaming—Sex Pistols and Punk Rock—*to be published by Faber and Faber U.K. in October.)*

BOB GRUEN


MERRY
GO
ROUND
WHERE FASHION MATTERS
FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Elvis wanted to be an example to young people. Some say that because he used drugs he couldn't. But they overlooked the fact that he never used illegal drugs. The drugs were always prescribed by his physician. He was a very sincere and decent man.

—Richard M. Nixon

IT WAS JUST DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS 1970 AND ELVIS PRESLEY WAS FLYING to Washington, D.C., on an American Airlines DC-9. In the warm gloom of the first-class cabin, he was the Vegas Elvis, the one middle America loved to love, reasonably slim and superficially healthy with his triangular sideburns all but meeting under his chin. It was an hour into the flight, and the other first-class passengers were starting to get used to the fact that the King of Rock'n' Roll was on the plane. What they didn't know was that Elvis was almost certainly loaded out of his skull and definitely in the grip of an obsession.

Elvis flagged down a passing cabin attendant and asked her for writing materials. Gripping the blue ballpoint pen with airline logo and frowning in concentration, he began a letter to the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon:

"Dear Mr. President,

First let me introduce myself, I am Elvis Presley and I admire you and have great respect for your office. . . ."

Elvis continued for five pages in his cramped and none-too-legible handwriting, explaining how he could play an active part in the war on drugs. If only the President would grant him some kind of official appointment and give him a badge, he could come on like Captain Marvel, Jr., his boyhood hero, and cleanse the country of the evil of narcotics. "The drug culture, the hippie element, the SDS, the Black Panthers do not consider me their enemy . . . or part of what they call the establishment. . . . " He was offering, in his time off from rock'n'roll, to be a "federal drug agent at large." Shazam!

The truth was a little less grandiose. Elvis wanted a federal narc badge. He just had to have one. Elvis collected police badges. It was a habit he'd almost certainly copied from his manager Colonel Tom Parker, who had been well aware that getting cozy with the local law made the life of a tour promoter a hell of a lot easier. Slap a few backs, grease a few palms, maybe get yourself made an honorary deputy sheriff, and a lot of the troubles of the road could be avoided. Indeed, the colonel only got himself made a colonel in the first place by buddying up to Louisiana Governor Jimmy Davis until he gave him totally meaningless rank. Shazam!

There was a lot less method to Elvis's badge madness. He just liked badges—bright, shiny symbols of authority. The one badge that Elvis didn't have in his collection was the one carried by agents of the Bureau of Narcotics (later the DEA). He'd asked them but had been informed that the bureau didn't hand out badges to rock stars, and that really burned his ass. It was this matter (aside from perhaps Dr. Nick's prescription pills) that was keeping Elvis going during the flight, scrawling his rambling letter to Nixon.

Arriving in the capital, the Operation to Get Elvis a Badge shifted into high gear. At around eight in the morning, Elvis arrived in a limo at the gates of the White House to hand-deliver his letter and demand an immediate audience with the President. He was told that his request would be considered, and after leaving every conceivable phone number where he might be reached, Elvis went back to the Washington Hotel to wait for the call.

The Presley letter might have been consigned to the nut pile except that it was spotted by a bright White House aide named Dwight Chapin. Chapin passed the letter on to White House Chief of Staff and Watergate conspirator H.R. Haldeman with a recommendation reading " . . . it would be wrong to push Presley off onto the Vice President . . . if the President wants to meet with some bright young people, Presley might be a perfect one to start with." Translation—what with the war and everything, Nixon needed all the help he could get. Shazam!

Haldeman went for it, and at 12:45 P.M. the same day, December 21, 1970, Elvis Presley was ushered into the Oval Office. First there were photographs. On the left there was Nixon, blue suit, little stars-and-stripes pin in his lapel and, maybe on account of the occasion, a muted paisley-pattern tie. On the right was Elvis, in a black-velvet suit, a Lord Byron–style shirt, an Al Sharpton–style medallion, and the kind of belt, with a buckle the size of a dinner plate, that the World Wrestling Federation awards to Hulk Hogan. Shazam!

After the pictures, Elvis presented Nixon with a commemorative Colt 45 World War II pistol accompanied by seven silver bullets. He flashed some examples of his badge collection and then launched into his pitch about how he was in this unique position to infiltrate the drug culture. (This from a man who couldn't infiltrate a 7-Eleven without giving away a couple of Cadillacs and starting a riot.)

And then he started sticking it to the Beatles. As the official record from the Nixon Archives tells it: "The Beatles had been a real force for anti-American spirit. [Presley] said that the Beatles came to this country, made their money, and then returned to England where they promoted an anti-American theme. The President nodded. Presley indicated to Nixon, in a 'very emotional' manner, that he was 'on his side.' "

THE KING'S WAR ON DRUGS: Elvis Meets Nixon

Elvis was flying. He was just a poor boy from Tennessee, but he wanted to restore respect for the flag. He'd studied Communist brainwashing techniques, so he knew all about what he was up against, and . . . yeah right, shazam By this point, Nixon realized that this might not be an encounter to go down in his memoirs, and maybe Elvis's letter should have gone to the nut pile after all. But Elvis wasn't stopping, he was blasting on full power. Captain Marvel, Jr., would infiltrate them hippies and turn them around for Dick Nixon, America, and God. Carried away by this vision, Elvis concluded by grabbing Nixon, the President who couldn't stand to be touched, and hugging him. Shazam!

Nixon was making frantic signals. Give this overdressed maniac his badge and make sure he never comes back to the White House again. Elvis, oblivious to the confusion he'd caused, not only got his badge but was also made an honorary federal agent. He went happily back to Graceland to celebrate Christmas in the bosom of his henchmen, and Nixon went back to running the Vietnam War, safe in the knowledge that subversive Communist junkies throughout the country would be glancing furtively over their shoulders, wondering if Elvis Presley was watching them.

MICK FARREN

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MERRY
GO
ROUND

Once upon a time in a land far away, a man fell in love with a woman who became Madonna.

"I'M GONNA BE A BIG STAR!" SHE TOLD the shampoo girl from behind a head full of suds in the Barberman beauty salon on University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus.

He looked up from the shag he was wrestling with and saw the sassy brunette smiling coquettishly and snapping her gum with self-satisfaction. He was going to enjoy layering this girl's hair.

There must have been something about his meaty physique she liked, because the next day she pedaled her bicycle by the salon, her 18-year-old legs pumping and lifting her rear end off the seat. When she caught his eye, she stuck her tongue out at him. And then she rode away. She was hot.

That night he went with some of his friends to the local pizzeria and saw her again. She was a waitress there.

She was very focused: It was as if she had made up her mind that he was the one she was going to be with during this chapter of her life. She didn't have to try too hard because being with Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone was an offer he wasn't about to refuse.

He found out that she was pretty straight. She shared an apartment with a couple of university students. She didn't smoke, like he did, or drink or do drugs. She was a great bubble gum blower. He found out that she liked to read and loved to watch foreign movies; *Murmur of the Heart* was one of her favorites. He also discovered that her pet passion, besides making love, was going to the local gay discos, especially a place called the Rubaiyat.

Her uninhibited dancing turned him on. Dancing was her monomania, as much a part of her identity as the clingy sweat pants she pulled tight around her waist with a thick leather belt. By the end of their first month together he just wanted to make love to her all the time, and it was clear he was falling in love.

She once sang him an Al Jarreau song in her thin mezzo-soprano voice. That's when he realized she had a good voice. She had a lot of style, a lot of individuality. One day she made him cut her hair all the way up to her ears. She reminded him of a Gypsy, somehow always spiritually transient.

For him, the highlight of their affair was one spring afternoon when they rode their bikes to a grassy nook beside a river. They brought a picnic, but they didn't touch the food. Dressed like a latter-day Lolita in shorts and a child's souvenir T-shirt from Boblo Island, a Detroit amusement park, Madonna's cheeky flirtatiousness enraged him. But the tighter he grabbed her, the more impudent a tease she became. She drove him crazy.

He thought they'd be together forever. But Madonna's only true love—her only lasting commitment, the real paramour about which she fantasized—was her career. It was hard for him not to be jealous. But he loved her and wanted for her what she wanted for herself. He didn't fully understand that when she told his shampoo girl that she was going to be a really big star, she meant the biggest of her generation. And so he willingly drove her the 600 miles from Ann Arbor to New York City so that she could audition for the prestigious Alvin Ailey dance school. Throughout the 14-hour drive she talked. She talked about how big she was going to be, and he agreed. She talked about how she knew she was destined for greatness, and he smiled.

Madonna won a scholarship to attend Alvin Ailey. It was only a short period of time before she would move to New York City, and she began wrapping up her business in Michigan.

Gently, but with certainty, she cut him loose. She wanted to begin this new phase of her trek to stardom unencumbered. He was 23, she was not yet 20, and she broke his heart. Soon after she left Michigan, he enrolled in the dance program at the local university. About a year after she moved to New York he followed, but their relationship never resumed.

Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone, class of '77, in her high school yearbook, *above*, and in a teenage snapshot, *above right*

They remained friends, and he watched her career for years: the short stint she studied with Ailey, her tenure as a Pearl Lang dancer. He witnessed her transition from dance to pop, and her work with the Breakfast Club, a new wave band she lived with in a synagogue in Queens and for whom she sang and played drums. When her first record came out, he didn't really like it, and he told her so.

She stopped calling him as much after that. He thinks back to the times he spent with her a lot. It's hard not to. He sees Madonna's face relentlessly splashed on magazine covers, billboard posters, and television, hyped with a daily grind that has become as predictable as the sun rising. And he can't help but remember her hype back in 1977, and how he bought it, just like he was supposed to.

EUGENIA BONE

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM STARFILE

MERRY
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SKIDZ

4

THE END OF THE INNOCENCE: Who Killed Bobby Fuller?

ON THE MORNING THAT ROCK'N'ROLL idol Bobby Fuller failed to return home, his mother, Loraine, woke up anxious. Peering out the front door of Bobby's Hollywood apartment at 1776 North Sycamore, just up the hill from Graumann's Chinese Theatre, she noticed that her light blue Oldsmobile, which her son had borrowed, was not in the driveway.

Rick Stone, the Bobby Fuller Four's road manager, had fallen asleep in front of the TV and thought he heard Bobby leave the apartment around 2:30 A.M. Bobby had mentioned going out to find a girl named Melanie or Melodie—and also something about taking his third LSD trip. Acid was on the street and Bobby, like every other kid on the Coast, was trying to be hip to the new head.

It was July 18, 1966, and the Bobby Fuller Four's newest single, "Magic Touch," was on the radio nationwide. The band had had two recent hits with "Love's Made a Fool of You" and their version of the Sonny Curtis tune "I Fought the Law." Their club gigs attracted celebrities like Sally Field, Nancy Sinatra, Ryan O'Neal, Donovan, and John Sebastian. After 18 months in L.A., El Paso's BF4 were a smash.

Later that day Rick, BF4 guitarist Jim Reese, and drummer Dalton Powell met at their rehearsal studio for a sensitive business meeting with their manager, Del-Fi Records' Bob Keene. Bobby, usually the consummate businessman, never showed.

Around 5:00 P.M. the same day, visiting El Paso musicians Ty Grimes and Mike Ciccarelli drove to Bobby's apartment. They noted that Bobby's mother's light blue Olds was not there. As they came up the front stairs to ring the bell, Loraine walked down the back stairs to grab the mail. She noticed Ty's Texas license plates; then she saw her Olds, which had not been there only moments earlier.

In the sweltering heat, Loraine found Bobby in the car, lying across the seat with his head under the steering wheel. Gasoline was boiling up out of an open 2.5-gallon can in the front seat. A gas hose lay nearby. She took one look at Bobby's burned face and fell to screaming incoherently. She knew he was dead.

Bob Keene, who arrived within minutes, tried to lift Bobby's head. Bobby was stiff. He'd been dead for hours.

Neither the car nor its contents were ever dusted for fingerprints. Only the gas can and the hose were booked as evidence. The police were convinced that Bobby's death had been either accidental or a suicide, apparently against the bulk of available evidence: (1) the car had been moved, but Bobby was found in full rigor mortis, (2) band members, who arrived on the scene at Loraine's instigation, reported seeing blood on Bobby's face and golf shirt, and (3) Bobby hadn't given any indication of being depressed.

Los Angeles deputy medical examiner Jerry Nelson performed an autopsy at 8:45 that evening. The report states that Bobby's face, chest, and side were covered in "petechial hemorrhages," probably caused by gasoline fumes and the heat. He found no bruises, no broken bones, no cuts. No evidence of beating. The coroner's case report reads: "Body in full rigor, skin slip due to hi. temp in car." Boxes for both "accident" and "suicide" are marked, but followed by question marks.

Lab tests for barbiturates and alcohol, which might have deepened any brief moments of depression, were negative. No Dorden or Valium. No poisons like strychnine or cyanide. The blood and lung samples that had been saved were exhausted before any tests for LSD-25 or other drugs could be performed.

On October 17, Nelson ascribed the death to "asphyxia due to inhalation of gasoline." Bobby's bladder, however, had been full, which seemed to indicate that he'd been unconscious for a long time before he died.

In 1983 Rick Stone reported that he was sure Bobby's head had been doused with gasoline. To this day Jim Reese maintains that he saw a half-burned book of matches and a burn on the vinyl of the back seat of the car. Had someone tried to set the car aflame and failed, interrupted, perhaps, by Loraine when she came downstairs?

Bob Keene, brother Randy, Jim, and Rick all distinctly remember that life insurance policies had been taken out on the entire band, though their memories differ over dollar amounts. Keene today says that these were routinely purchased by his two financial partners but that he himself knew none of the details.

"I remember Bobby telling me they had a policy on him for eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars," claims Rick. "Randy had one for a hundred thousand. Jim had a hundred and Dalton had a hundred—and the money was all to go to the record company."

Rick still contends that Bobby had been roughed up and further claims that when the family received Bobby's clothes, his mother's house shoes, which Bobby was wearing, were torn up, as though he had been dragged on asphalt.

ON THE EVENING OF July 17, 1966, the day before Bobby's body was found, the BF4 were on the verge of breaking up. Dalton Powell was planning to return to his wife and child in El Paso. Jim Reese had been drafted and was probably headed for Vietnam. Infighting among the band members had come to a head in the last few weeks. Bobby had apparently called El Paso musician Doug Neal to replace his brother Randy on bass.

"When we went out to California," says Jim Reese, "it was with the understanding that it was all for one, one for all. Within six months Keene had changed that agreement."

As a singer and songwriter, Bobby had a more lucrative contract than the rest, playing for thousands a night while his friends got the usual musician's union scale.

Moreover, the BF4 were pissed off at the way their El Paso/Buddy Holly sound was being altered by Keene's management team. They were roped into a lip sync surf-music appearance in a low-budget Nancy Sinatra film called *Ghost in the Invisible Bikini*. On their new single, "Magic Touch," Keene brought in soul producer Barry White, transforming their rockabilly feel into a softer Motown sound.

The BF4 also believed that Keene and his partners in Stereo/Fi—including an L.A. businessman named Larry Nunes—had failed to fill record orders for their new singles. They had talked among themselves about wanting out of the deal.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF RICK STONE

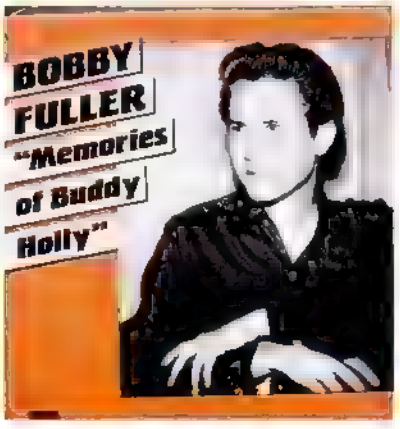
"I THINK THAT BOBBY TOLD US THAT MELANIE WORKED FOR LARRY Nunes," says Jim Reese of the girl Bobby supposedly went to meet that fateful night, and who has never been heard from since.

Band members believe that Melanie was the girlfriend or "property" of a minor Hollywood thug, who was possibly jealous of Bobby's involvement with her. No one wants names printed because they don't know for sure, and the man is still at large. And if somebody did this to Bobby . . .

Two private dicks were hired to investigate the case, Tom Pugh of Los Angeles' Stein Agency and John A. Webster, but both dropped off the trail sans explanation. Bob Keene thinks that one of the investigators was hired by his partners. Neither of the PI's will talk. The trail is now 25 years cold.

"The summer Bobby Fuller died, old rock'n'roll died," laments Rick Stone about the music scene. "When we got back that spring from being on the road for six months, everybody was screwing around with drugs. Innocent rock'n'roll was no more."

DEAN KUIPERS



And then there were three. The Bobby Fuller Four circa 1966. *right*, before L.A. proved too much for the band.

Bobby Fuller's violent death remains a mystery nearly twenty five years later

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GANGSTER RAP

Grandmaster Flash and the Early Days of Hip Hop

A SUBWAY CAR BLASTED PAST OVERhead, a shower of sparks lighting the brick rubble of the burnt-out tenements along Boston Road and 169th Street. It was a sweltering Bronx summer night in 1978 and a group of "gangsterleen" outlaw types in black hooded sweats waited sullenly outside the Black Door club to hear DJ Grandmaster Flash. Flash was fast. Flash was "death."

Outside the Black Door the tension between the Casanovas, the crew hired that night for security, and the local Boston Road Crew was as serious as cancer.

Tiny, the leader of the Casanovas, was at the entrance. Nobody fucked with Tiny. Raymond Chandler, Flash's manager, was pacing nervously inside watching junior hoodlums glumly raise their arms as Tiny frisked them and collected their dollars. A local homeboy had been killed at the club just two weeks before, and that was bad for business. It was Tiny's job tonight not to let anything like that happen again.

Chandler had followed Flash's parties since the summer before in the pitch dark of St. Ann's Park and had watched Flash's MC lineup grow to its current strength of four.

Flash's first MC was Cowboy (Keith Wiggins, who died in 1989). Next came Kid Creole, who brought his older brother Melle Mel (perhaps rap's greatest lyricist), who brought in Mr. Ness (a.k.a. Scorpio). Rahim was yet to defect from the Funky Four to make it Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five.

After one particularly wild-assed late-night park jam at St. Ann's, Ray had come to Flash and made him an offer: "Why don't we try it inside for a dollar a head?" Parks get cold in winter and everybody felt it was time for cash money, so Flash moved his crew to the club. Word spread fast. The Black Door became a magnet for every B-boy and stickup kid in the "Boogie Down Bronx."

Inside the Black Door, as his assistant Disco Bee pulled out records from the crates, Flash watched the crowd fill up the murky space. He started with slow jams, building up through the night to a manic frenzy. The room was dark except for a red light bulb strung over the sound system. The bulb lit up the smoke and the acrid smell of angel dust was everywhere. Flash didn't use his strobe light, presumably because it drove the dustheads crazy.

Cowboy grabbed the mike and announced, "The pulsating, inflating, disco-shaking, heart-breaking *Graaaand Maaaaster* Flash!" Flash tried a new trick with Pleasure's "Celebrate." The Furious froze while Flash's needle went *zigga, zigga, zigga*, then jumped to a new formation as Flash dropped a massive cut of horn and drum—*blaaam!* Four beats—*blaaam!* Hard-core vogue shit. The crowd was so awed they couldn't move a muscle.

Flash spun "Listen to Me" by Baby Huey, while the stickup crews took this as a signal to begin stalking their prey. The Furious began to chant, "Casanovas, all over. Casanovas, all over!" If you weren't strapped it was time to slide close to the light bulb and chill.

As Flash slipped the Twentieth Century Steel Band falsetto melody line into the mix ("Children playing, women producing / Men going to work, some are stealing"), Doc, a skinny kid in a mock turtleneck, innocently wandered into the men's room. Looking into a knot of shadowy, hooded faces puffing dust, Doc felt metal poke into the base of his spine. Off went Doc's pair of Adidas, his gold chain, his school ring, his wallet, his Kools.

Back on the floor Flash was pumping 116 beats a minute, cutting up "I Can't Stop" by John Davis and the Monster Orchestra when Joe-Kid from the Boston Road Crew leapt up on top of the turntable, pistol drawn, making a less than polite request for a slow jam: "Yo Disco Bee, change the beat! Take off the fucking record! I want 'Seven Minutes of Funk'! And you better have the fellas call out my name too!" Maybe Joe-Kid was pissed that arch rivals the Casanovas were getting juice in *his* neighborhood. Anyway, the Casanovas grabbed his ass and threw it outside. It was too late and too frantic for "Seven Minutes of Funk."

Grandmaster Flash was one of the first rappers to get off the streets and into clubs. He still got caught in the crossfire.

The Black Door was hot and funky and packed. Nigger Twins was in the house! Dyn-o-mite was in the house! Zulus was in the house! Casanova Fly was in the house! Flash was dicing "Bongo Rock" by Apache into machine gun beats and everybody was freakin' with a partner, or hitting the floor. Cowboy (God bless him) urged the crowd to "throw [its] hands in the air and wave 'em like you just don't care!" And they did.

Suddenly there was a *pow!*

Flash thought it was the speakers: His crossovers were always blowing with a loud bang. Cowboy was still rocking the mike, but looking over his shoulder he saw blood on Kid Creole's clothes. "Oh God, Kid Creole's been shot!" Then Cowboy collapsed against Flash. Managing to pull down his own pants, he saw he too had been shot. Flash cut the music dead.

People were scrambling like cockroaches to get out, leaving an empty floor littered with girls' shoes. The Casanovas searched the place, and in the back room they found a local guy called Lance with a 30/30 rifle. Lance was the one guy from Boston Road who was part of the in-house security. He didn't mean to fire. It just went off. The bullet had traveled through a thin back wall, through one crate of Flash's beat records, through Cowboy's upper thigh, and out his right ass cheek.

Nobody was mad at Lance, including Cowboy. Cowboy was getting ready to be driven to the hospital by Creole, who hadn't actually been shot, just sprayed with Cowboy's blood. But Raymond Chandler, an ex-policeman, knew there wouldn't be any trouble. He was a genius at calming static. Any questions asked at the hospital would be taken care of by his friends—the local police.

Meanwhile the stickup kids were flushed out of the Black Door, disappearing into the night. They were laughing and excited as they went home. Gunshots popped like popcorn all the way down the Boston Road.

CHARLIE AHEARN

ILLUSTRATION BY JANE DICKSON

BODY DOUBLE!

The Strange Tale of the Kiss Drummer Who Wasn't

THE STORY HAD SPREAD THROUGHout the L.A. rock community long before it hit the tabloids. Peter Criss, the former "Catman" drummer of Kiss, was living as a drunken bum under the Santa Monica pier, sleeping in the men's room there at night. A tragic story, but one that's not unknown in the history of Tinsel Town.

Only problem was that the *real* Peter Criss had been following a full-time health regime since moving to Los Angeles from New York six years ago ("I lived an insane life for so many years that it almost made me fucking nuts") and was living very privately in a comfortable beachfront home with his wife, a former *Playboy* Playmate, and their daughter. On New Year's Day 1991, when he first saw the two-page spread the *Star* had devoted to the fake Peter Criss, he was at an airport trying to book a plane home to see his 62-year-old mother, who had been ill with cancer and died before the plane reached the ground.

In the meantime, professional ex-substance abusers Dallas Taylor and Tom Arnold (Roseanne Barr's husband) had journeyed to the pier to help the man Gene Simmons never forgave for writing and singing Kiss's biggest hit, "Beth." That, too, made the pages of the *Star*. Then, Cheryl Anne Thompson, who alleges she is one of the Catman's former lovers, sent "Criss" a first-class plane ticket and an invitation to live with her in Waltham, Massachusetts.

"I really almost threw up [when he stepped off the plane]," Thompson told *People*, the magazine that exposed the hoax. She knew immediately it wasn't the real Criss. She told Christopher Dickinson, the 39-year-old impostor, that he could move in anyway. "I felt pretty compelled to help this person because he did indeed fly cross-country," she said on the TV program *Hard Copy*.

"MY DAUGHTER WOULD *LOVE* TO TALK TO YOU," THOMPSON'S mother, Carol, told SPIN. "She's been in touch with Peter, and she has lots of new information. The impostor is sitting next to me as we speak." This last sentence is one she would repeat each time she talked to the reporter. "She's doing a taping of *Geraldo* tomorrow. She's on page six of the *Star* again this week." Cheryl Anne screamed with delight in the background. "Oh, yes, she's going to be in a movie. Now, before I put her on the line, I'd like to know how much you plan on compensating us for this exclusive interview with Cheryl Anne Thompson."

SPIN declined the invitation to pay Cheryl Anne for her story, but she suddenly appeared at the magazine's New York offices anyway, following a taping of the *Geraldo* show. She had some Polaroids of her with a member of Air Supply and on John Waite's tour bus. (She confessed to a SPIN editor that Criss's wife "hates" her.) Meanwhile, Cheryl Anne's mother called demanding faxes of contracts and wired money. ("We were cheated by the *Globe*," Cheryl Anne explained. "My mother's a little paranoid.") Growing paranoid ourselves (and having recently seen *The Grifters*), SPIN began to wonder if Cheryl Anne and her mother might be working a short-time con, and the interview was canceled.

"SUDDENLY, I'M forced to come out," says the real Criss, who's been planning a comeback—writing new music and an autobiography about his experiences with Kiss. "Pictures of my house are in magazines all across the country. Roseanne Barr's calling me on the phone. There's people hanging around wherever I go. It's like, 'C'mon, I just got back from burying my mother!' We were actually hounded by reporters during the funeral."

There have always been rock-star impostors, as well as deranged fans who believe they really *are* the person they idolize. Mark David Chapman is the most tragic example, and certain Elvis impersonators are the most humorous. But it was especially easy to impersonate a member of Kiss.

"Of course people could impersonate us, because we had makeup on for most of our career," says Criss. "What happened is this guy went into a bar one night years ago, and someone said, 'Are you Peter Criss?' He got to drink all night for nothing, so he kept it going until it became reality for him. And then he met some jerk reporter from the *Star*. If they had checked their list, they would have known that their magazine comes to my house because my wife subscribes to it. And now they're putting all the blame on this poor guy." (Indeed, the poor guy, who looks like he's lacking some brain cells, apologized to Criss during the *Hard Copy* segment.) "It's sad. They're using him to take the rap. I mean, they're paying him money for it, but obviously this is the *Star*'s fault."

And as for Cheryl Anne? "I don't know her," says Criss, laughing. "I don't know that girl. I really don't. I've met so many people in my life, and I've traveled around the world so many times that, I mean, we could have met at some backstage thing. But I looked at her picture in a magazine—and I don't know her! I mean that from my heart. She called here screaming at me. And I said, 'I'll come to Massachusetts, look you in the eye and tell you I don't know you.' And then her mom got on the phone."

Moral: People identify with rock stars so much they want to become them. (Or, as my good friend Gregg Turner—a math professor and Angry Samoan—once observed: "People will not only sell their souls to be famous for 15 minutes; they'll sell their souls simply to be *near* that 15 minutes of fame.")

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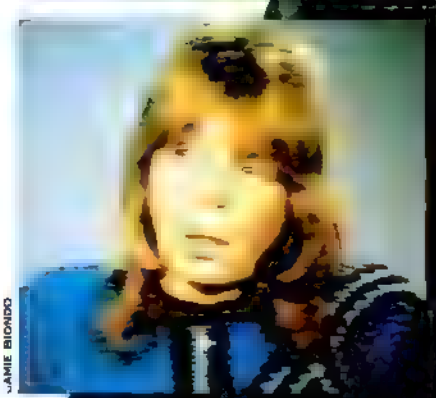

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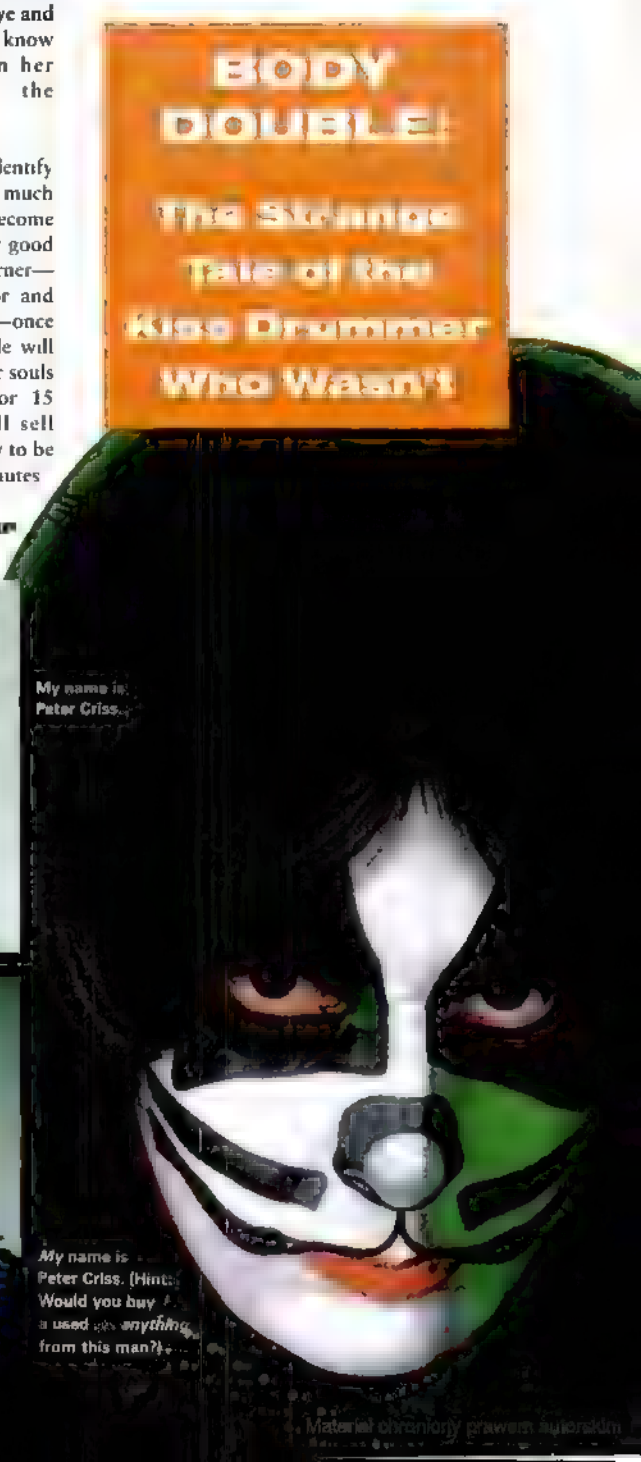

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LYRICAL KING

With Morrissey's new album, *Kill Uncle*, about to be released and talk of a U.S. tour, England's last great pop poet is back. STEVEN DALY traveled to Manchester to interview the high priest of shameless self-absorption.

A fire crackles in the hearth, a fax machine purrs in the distance, and a handful of Italian fashion mags nestle in the rack as Morrissey reclines on his favorite chaise longue, contemplating life without the Smiths.

"I didn't have any high expectations of my solo career. There are lots of lead singers in groups who attempt solo careers and it never happens. Mick Jagger couldn't sell a solo record to save his life, so why should it happen to me?

"I think a lot of people were very, very surprised that I've continued to sell records. The general opinion was that once Johnny Marr unplugged that umbilical cord I would just kind of deflate like a paddling pool." ▶

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There's little smugness in this softly spoken statement, but perhaps there should be. Since the dissolution of that prolific partnership, Morrissey has remained, as ever, just "Morrissey," while it is guitarist Johnny Marr, hotly tipped as a long-term talent, who bears the markdown tag "ex-Smith" as he languishes among minor rock royalty, a Jeff Beck for the '90s, 18th in line to the Traveling Wilburys' throne.

By the final Smiths album, *Strangeways, Here We Come*, there were strong hints that Marr had strip-mined his record collection once too often, that Morrissey might profitably seek fresh settings for his finely tuned couplets and overwrought emotions. These he found, from the stentorian strings of "Everyday Is Like Sunday" to the baroque bathos of the current single, "Our Frank," the best of his post-Smiths work. Morrissey is a man still at the top of his game.

Considering the prodigious output of the Smiths, though, these have been an alarmingly peaceful couple of years for Steven Morrissey. The period since *Viva Hate* has been marked only by the sporadic release of what the singer has called "funny little singles" (recently assembled on the *Bona Drag* compilation). To the new studio album, *Kill Uncle*, we must therefore apply, must we not, the prickly term "comeback"?

"Well, I haven't been anywhere, but I suppose some people will view it as a new beginning."

How would you, I ask, define the progression from *Viva Hate*?

"I think it's a much better record, particularly in terms of lyrics. Beyond that I can't really say much because it is still basically my voice, and I only have one voice. And it is still what's considered to be a very traditional musical lineup."

Do you never feel constricted by such orthodoxy?

"No I don't, I absolutely don't. I don't really have anything to do with the music industry. I don't possess instruments and amplifiers, I don't have a studio tucked away in the basement. Pushing musical barriers doesn't interest me at all, I just have a particular instinct that I follow. Which is less to do with music than it's to do with other things like the voice and words. I do absolutely understand the construction of the song, but as far as creating a new form of music that has never been heard before . . ."

That kind of thing is best left to bands such as Nelson and Wilson Phillips. I was thinking, though, in terms of different approaches to production.

"Well, the Smiths were never terribly well-produced, terribly polished—it doesn't mean the records were bad of course, because they weren't—but when I listen to a lot of the Smiths' discography I wince slightly and decry the fact that we were often forced to do things under somewhat threadbare conditions."

Surely after racking up a few hit albums you could have demanded a modicum of luxury?

"Not really, because we were terribly eager and polite, and therefore you just wake up and do it. You realize later that things could have been slightly better, that if someone had made a significant phone call you could have been reasonably pampered."

Which, presumably, you are these days.

"Yeah, definitely reasonably pampered."

Getting one's due, as it were.

"Well it's about time," he concludes with a trace of indignation.

THOUGH MORRISSEY'S TENDENcy to draw from a comfortable pool of musical references can occasionally be infuriating, he is of course one of the lyrical miracles of our time, someone who can legitimately claim to have expanded the poetic vocabulary of the popular song, dragging it into the heretofore-unexamined realm of hairdressers on fire and girlfriends in comas. Not to mention the sackload of other ticklish taboo subjects he's tackled.

"I don't know what makes them taboos—I don't recall anybody appearing on television and saying, 'If you happen to be thinking of writing a song tonight, don't forget that you must not . . .' I've never come across any written guidelines, but obviously we know the society we live in, and we know what gets peoples' backs up. And anything vaguely real tends to ruffle people's feathers."

So these subjects attract you?

"No, not at all," he says innocently, then titters. "It's just the world I live in, the state of mind I tend to have."

Well, songs like "Bengali in Platforms," and the new one, "Asian Rut," tend to arouse suspicion. It's highly unusual to write about Britain's Asian community.

"I disagree. There are a lot of Asian people, so why is it unusual?"

I was merely curious. It *is* an unusual subject, one that certainly wouldn't crop up in, say, a Prefab Sprout song.

"But surely that tells you more about Paddy McAloon [Prefab Sprout's singer/songwriter] than about me. I'm actually a fan of his; I criticized him recently and slightly regretted it, even though I believed what I said. I thought the first record that he made was reasonably priceless."

Are there any other of your peers worthy of your attention?

"Yes, there are a few. I was terribly fond of Paul Weller."

From her guest shot on Morrissey's too wacko-for-most single "November Spawned a Monster" we can assume that quirky Canadian canary Mary Margaret O'Hara can join this stellar company. What brought them together?

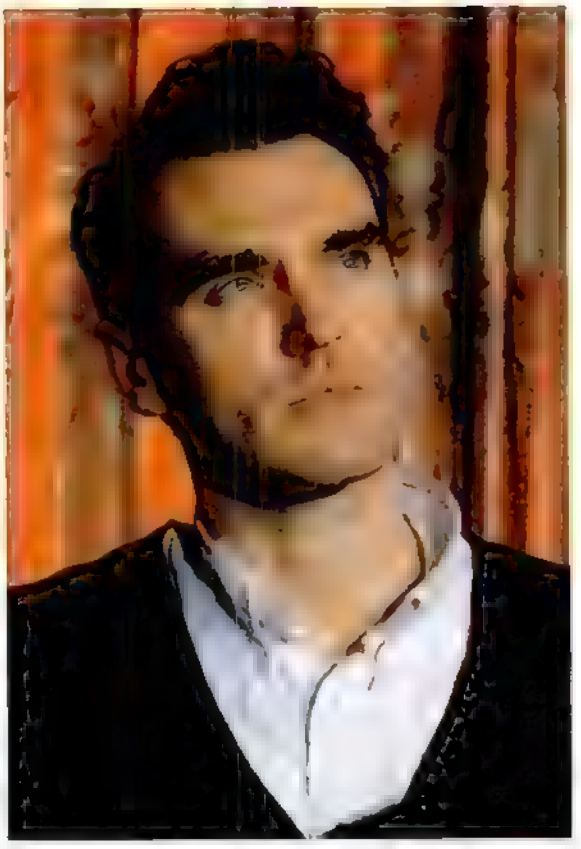
"A great gust of wind," proclaims Morrissey with a flourish. "I was very attracted by her eccentricity, so I thought she'd work quite well; and as it turned out she was quite perfect. I find it fascinating that someone can vocalize without using specific words."

Like Liz Fraser and the Cocteau Twins, right?

"They make me vomit on sight," he declares, sobering up instantly. "I think there's a right way and a wrong way, and I think the Cocteau Twins have always applauded themselves for doing it the wrong way. They're outstandingly unappealing on every human level; they look awful, their interviews are awful, and their records are just utter stupidity."

Jeepers, I cry. I seem to have touched a nerve.

"It's the way you're sitting."



The period between *Viva Hate* and Morrissey's new LP, *Kill Uncle*, was marked only by the sporadic release of what he calls "funny little singles."

LAWRENCE WATSON

"I'VE CALMED DOWN SLIGHTLY SINCE THE SMITHS," Morrissey contends. "I'm not as desperately eager as I once was, and I'm very happy about that. I think it makes me a slightly more adjusted human being."

As we gaze out on the well-manicured garden of Morrissey Mansions, situated on the outskirts of Manchester, I wonder if this newfound contentment might not endanger his creative impulse.

"No, because I still make the crucial error of believing that records I make are my life. But these days I want to be slightly more methodical. I do realize that I have an audience and that they would possibly like me to be on television a lot more than I am, but I can only orchestrate things in a natural way. There's nothing show business about me, nothing at all. Sometimes I'm astonished that I manage to do as much as I do when I consider how detached I am. You don't seem very convinced. . . ."

Well, the detached part certainly rings true: One can't help hearing stories about Morrissey breaking off friendships and doing so "big-style."

"I'm a terribly glamorous person, you know, I like to do everything big-style. But when I fall out with people there are usually certain contractual things involved."

Does this carry over into your personal life?

"Usually not, no. Though I don't suffer fools gladly. I feel that if someone lets me down or crosses

Chill.
SMIRNOFF
It's the "how to"
on how to
kick back,
relax, and
say ahhhhh.
Smirnoff.
No question.

me, if I phone and they don't reply, well that's it, the drawbridge goes up."

Where do you seek outside stimulus? I see the odd theatrical biography scattered around.

"Oh yes, I'm terribly clichéd," he grins bashfully. "It's books and videos . . . and lawsuits.

"I think I probably do all the things people expect me to do. It's all very private and very quiet, I don't see that many people. I do have some friends. I'm not as overbearingly intense as everybody thinks.

"The life I lead is reasonably routine. I have no notions of travel. I see holiday advertisements on the television, and I don't know what they are. I never, ever go on holiday. Though I'd quite like to be on a beach in the sun which I don't think I've ever done, being one of the old British brigade."

Surely, I probe, the accumulated wealth of the Smiths' years combined with today's major-label moolah must significantly alter the outlook of the man who mined this former petit bourgeois poverty for so many verité nuggets.

"I don't have an exotic life-style. I know that people think that if one is vaguely famous then you belong to this celebrity community, but I need hardly say that I have not filled in that application form. Well I did, but it was rejected."

One thing that certainly doesn't exercise the Morrissey mind these days is inventing pissy quotes for journalists. A handful of less-than-favorable notices in the British pop papers has resulted in a virtual embargo on interviews, depriving Morrissey's apostles of his once-regular epigrammatic epistles.

"The last few times I've been interviewed there has been enormous conviviality between me and the journalist, yet what emerges in print is generally unpleasant because of recent trends."

Recent trends?

"I think sympathy for me in England has disappeared slightly," he explains. "I think there is a general rule that you have your time, and then it has to be somebody else. And I don't think it matters what your standard of work is—you can make bad records when the wind is in your favor, as it were, and you will always be warmly reviewed, then you can make records at another time and nobody cares."

Surely it was Morrissey who set the tenor of his relationship with the press by his willingness to, at the slightest prompting, let loose with splenetic quips directed at the transient talents of the day. Could it be, I venture, that his role as the portable curmudgeon has backfired on him?

"Not really, because if you say, 'I'm not interested' or, 'I have no thoughts on . . .' they just assume that you're slipping slightly and that you're not as in tune as you should be. I don't feel obliged to keep up, and I'm not embarrassed if I don't know. I don't care to be abreast of trends and times."

Before the present press clampdown, a regular fixture of the Morrissey interview would be a call to insurrection, a plea for the younger generation to take up arms and establish its very own hegemony, an aesthetic coup like the one he and his fellow punk rockers once plotted. Well what do you know, with groups like the Happy Mondays, the Stone Roses, and their perpetually blooming progeny, it looks like he's got the revolution he ordered, with its source, ironically enough, in his beloved hometown of Manchester. Or has he?

"I feel numb with disappointment," Morrissey says with customary understatement. "I honestly believe that the records aren't good enough. Though it's very hard to judge when so much hype surrounds the situation. It's almost as if there came a certain time when the music press, which is where it all started, decided that this must happen in order to give the papers themselves extended life, because things were very dull at the time."

While I take deep issue with his chronology, I concur with Morrissey's assessment of the smothering attention paid to marginal talents who, faced with the obligatory backlash, will rapidly find themselves back behind the counter of the local 7-Eleven. But is he confident that the young Smiths would have survived such premature acclaim?

"Yes, because a lot of these newer groups don't release records very often, and I don't think they have many songs. I find that a lot of their songs are stretched out and fleshed out, which was obviously never the case with the Smiths.

"I think if it's a question of individualism then nobody can stop you. But if you don't have that individualism then it won't happen. So I must be honest and, without being particularly rude to anybody or wishing to sound totally damning of the situation, I'm not aware of any individualism in Manchester at the moment."

WITH SUCH IGNOMINIOUS DEVELOPMENTS ON his own doorstep, one would hardly blame Morrissey for simply taking the only way out left to an English gentleman. Yes, touring America.

Despite his reversal of fortune in the U.K., his star continues to rise stateside, where fans nurture dim memories of the Smiths' last triumphant tour in 1986. ("Let's just say someone lost a leg," Morrissey says cryptically of the jaunt's premature end.) The "most poignant" of his fan mail these days bears an American postmark, while he describes last year's near riot following an on-air appearance at Los Angeles radio station KROQ as "very, very emotional."

"I don't monitor Johnny Marr's movements. I don't know about his life other than what people tell me. I thought the record Electronic released was totally useless."

Morrissey appears poised to make a significant impact on the world's biggest record-buying market, but he remains rather less than gung ho at the prospect.

"I totally, absolutely wanted to be a British pop artist, which is what I became. I just wanted British success because I don't travel very well, I tend to have terrible spasms in airports; I can't really pack a suitcase, and I don't leave England very often. So the idea of running around the world in a pair of Lycra bicycle shorts is not very appealing.

Presumably, though, this has to be faced at some point during your solo career?

"Well yes, it will be. But without the Lycra shorts."

Intimate apparel aside, does the thought of all that hard slog put you off?

"No, no, it doesn't put me off, I'd like to do it. It's just that keeping a personal grip on the situation is very daunting."

Does that mean there's a reluctance to go all the way in America?

"Hmm, all the way. . . . I'll definitely get as far as Connecticut. I don't feel that if I tour America I'll instantly become one of the world's biggest recording artists—I don't think I ever will because of the way I am as a person. I could never have huge, suffocating mass appeal because, to begin with, I'm not too intelligent."

Even if you say so yourself . . .

"No, that's the opinion of others! I think that if and when I go to America it will be quite successful, but I don't think I'd ever make a very good American rock star. At all cost, however I'm *displayed*, it must be me and how I am. Once again, it must be strictly on my own terms."

Alas, Morrissey professes to be nowhere near finding that elusive "body of people" with whom he could confidently undertake a tour.

"It's very difficult because I don't socialize and it wouldn't occur to me to advertise. So when you don't socialize and you don't advertise"—he trails off laughing—"you're reasonably limited."

"I have very strict guidelines, very strict rules of basic taste in human beings as well as in music, which narrows life somewhat. Either a situation is right or, as in most cases, it's wrong.

"I get a lot of approaches from people who want to manage me, but they seem to always spell my name wrong or say something wrong. I'm not interested in a money mogul or anybody who wants to ram me down the public's throat. I have never been rammed down anybody's throat, and I think that's why the audience has remained very loyal. They appreciate the fact that it was a very honest success."

But who are these "loyal" supporters who have buoyed Morrissey's fortunes even amid the direst predictions of artistic bankruptcy and commercial decline?

"I'm not sure, I can't tell. I prefer not to think. And they're all of a particular breed, I don't think that's true. In fact I'm very surprised at the style of certain people who are interested in me."

Of course there is, I note, the stereotypical view of the typical Morrissey fan.

"Yes, yes, the hysteric depressive who rarely leaves the closet under the stairs."

But you find otherwise?

"No."

Sorry? I thought you just said—

"Yes, I do."

So they're normal people then.

"I'm hesitant to use the word *normal*, but since you've used it I will."

continued on page 104

EASTPAK

What you get out of it is what you put into it.

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While everyone else in Tel Aviv sealed themselves off in

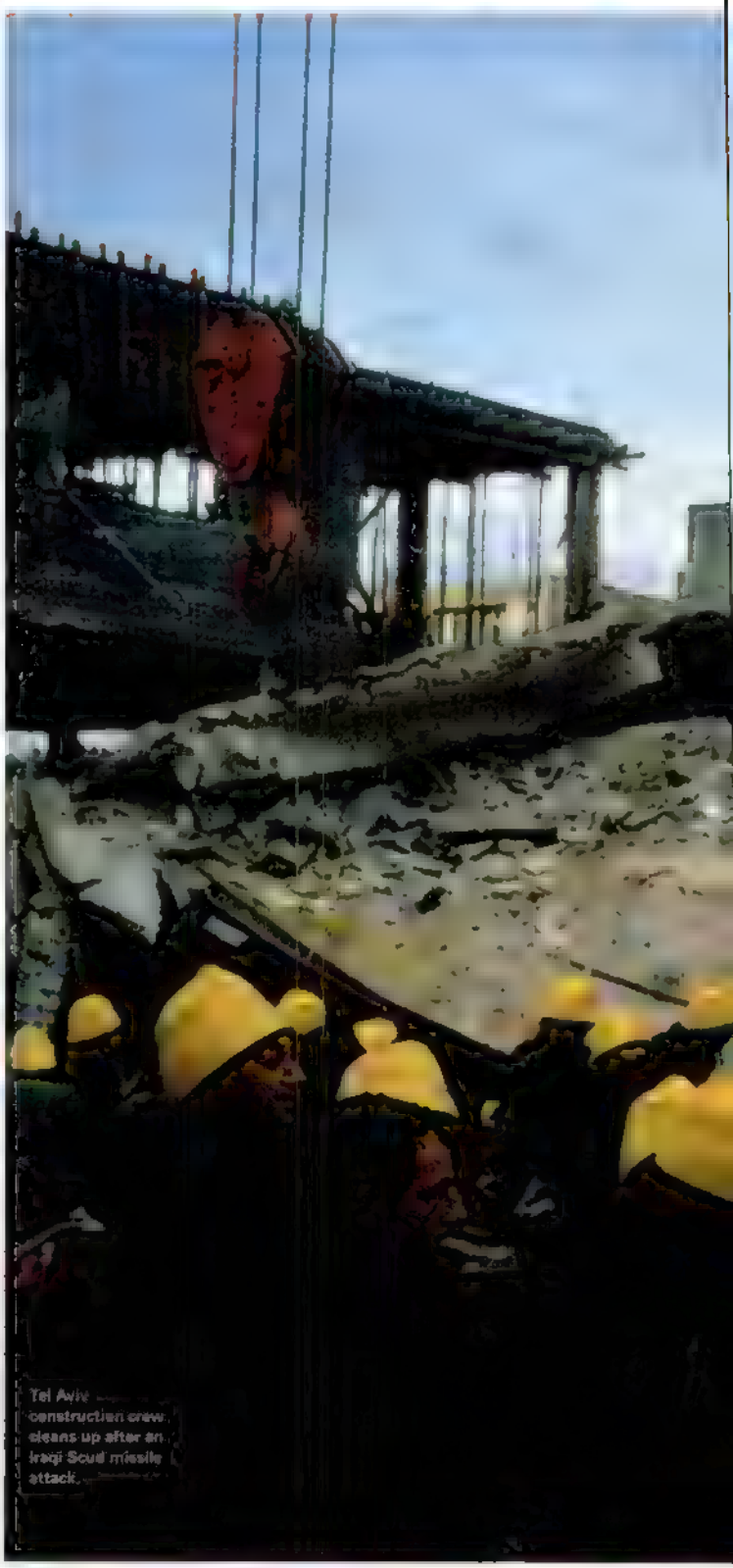
GIMME SHELTER

SUDDENLY THE NIGHT GETS DARKER AND TEL AVIV HUDDLES UP, ITS 300,000 inhabitants frozen in terror. Another alert. The loopy, high-low pitch of the siren gives the beat of a countdown. Within a few minutes, Iraqi Scuds traveling at over 4,000 miles an hour will plunge into central Tel Aviv.

Inside the Terminal, a bar on the seafront, the alert has stirred an atmosphere beyond terror—an excited confusion bordering on giddiness. Oren, the bartender, turns down the music and tunes into the military channel on the radio. Then he pours himself a beer. Some people grab their masks and fit them to their faces. Others don't move an inch. Nir, the manager, climbs up on a table and cups his hands around his mouth to call out above the wail of the siren: "Those of you who are afraid can take shelter in the Ramada hotel, just across the street."

Many of them, as it happens, do leave the bar, but not out of fear. With their glasses in hand and gas masks on, they gather in a cluster outside the bar and search the sky for a glimpse of the fireworks. Suddenly, three successive booms make the bar windows tremble: The Patriot missiles, at a distance, look like lines of fire over the rooftops. Two explosions, somewhere behind the clouds. "I think they hit them," whispers a pale-faced man. Before he ends his sentence, another explosion, louder this time, can be heard from the other side of the highway, in a residential area. Somebody sighs and says, "That's a Scud."

A strange uneasiness settles on the group. A few of them put their gas masks on. Others just go back into the bar, shaking their heads. ▶



Tel Aviv construction crew cleans up after an Iraqi Scud missile attack.

ESTATE BERTEL/GAMMA LIAISON NETWORK

straight through Hussein's missile attacks at a bar called

airtight apartments, the young, hip, and reckless partied

the Terminal. PIERRE HUREL reports on life during wartime.

Minutes later, an army spokesman announces over the radio that the chemical alert has ended. Oren slips on a cassette of David Bowie and cranks it up all the way.

DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS of the Gulf War, I went to the Terminal almost every night. This was where Tel Aviv's *zarooks*—the young, the slightly mad—came to unwind after each attack. The first time I went there it was 2:30 in the morning, January 17, and George Bush had just kicked off Operation Desert Storm. Oren shook his black curls and offered me a drink as he started to dance behind the bar. "A toast to Saddam!" he yelled.

My second visit to the Terminal came after two false alarms in the early hours of the next evening. Tel Aviv was transformed into a city of terror. A dead zone. Fear of the deadly chemical cloud pervaded every person, every thought. There were no cars in the streets; not a single light on, not even a shadow. There were only two places open in the whole city: the office of a small taxi company and the Terminal. That second night, only ten people were here. Oren was behind the bar, his sweatshirt sleeves rolled up and his eyes burning with anger. Moise, the boss, was there that night too. He was peeling potatoes for french fries because neither the cook nor the waitresses had come to work since the first missiles. His silk jacket was folded on a stool behind him. "Of course I'm going to stay open," he said. "It's my duty to my customers, to all Tel Avivians. This way all the world will see that Tel Aviv is still a city alive. At least here."

One inventive patron of the Terminal bar puts his gas mask to good use.

Two elegant girls, their eyes glittering from alcohol, moved their hips to the rhythm. Somebody shouted, "Saddam will never get us!"

I sat at the counter and drank straight tequilas. On the wall, near the cash box, there was a Blues Brothers poster with these words: "It's 106 miles to Chicago, we got a full tank of gas, half a pack of cigarettes, it's dark, and we're wearing sunglasses. Hit it." A few hours later, at dawn, Saddam's missiles hit Tel Aviv four times.

The next night a group of 20, twice as many as the night before, swaggered into the Terminal. Something was different this night. The music was louder, harder. One of the waitresses, Lori—a blond, boyish girl who likes Italy and Eau Sauvage cologne—had returned to work, bringing her sunshine smile with her.

Behind the bar, Dadi, the bartender with a ponytail and an earring, was dancing, throwing his arms about him. Two elegant girls, their eyes glittering from alcohol, moved their hips to the rhythm. Somebody shouted, "Saddam will never get us!"

The word spreads around the ghost city: The Terminal will stay open until it's been reduced to rubble. This is rock'n'roll resistance. During the second bout of missile attacks—five Scuds every night for three days—the Terminal is transformed into a fortress of defiance.

IT HAS BECOME A RITUAL. EVERY NIGHT AROUND 9:00 PM. there is another alert. A photographer friend and I grab our masks and rush out of the hotel. Once in the car, portable phone in hand, we wait a few minutes for a call from one of my contacts. After being informed of the exact location, I put my foot on the accelerator. On the way we notice that civil defense personnel have removed their masks, and we do the same. Luckily, we arrive "on the spot," within half an hour. The most realistic information, the emotional pictures, can only be captured during the first hour after the impact. After that, rescuers and police close off the area, and the press is barred. Our jobs done, we return directly to the hotel, drop our stuff, and fall out to the Terminal.

Each new day brings more people in. Once the alert passes, having been experienced and finally digested, Tel Aviv's *zarooks* get together and party. To hell with the paranoia! Homemade sealed rooms built in each apartment as protection against the chemical threat become boxes of fear, psychological coffins where one's own anxiety ricochets from the walls. You have to get out—move, dance, drink. In the Terminal, Moise decides that his waitresses, all of whom have returned to work, must start their shift by drinking a glass of iced vodka. Straight up.

The girls in the bar seem to get more beautiful every day. It's as if their leather miniskirts and tight jeans, maybe topped with a reggae cap or Yemenite hat slightly tilted, send off specific messages to the lunatic in Baghdad who is making their city tremble. Saddam is being attacked by red lipstick. One night at the Terminal, a girl with long curly hair called over a Swedish TV crew that was here to cover the resistance rockers. She told them she was going to dance in front of the camera—a dance that "darling Saddam will recognize." Through this recognition, she added as she climbed on a table, the "Baghdad bastard" will see that Israeli women don't give a shit about his missiles and that they will continue to hit on their guys.

She gave a tape of Oriental music to the DJ and began the sexiest belly dance I had ever seen in my life. Close up on an exposed shoulder, on the flying hands, on the ephemeral exposure of her waist—the Swedish cameraman began to blush. I don't know if Saddam ever got a chance to see the tape.

Something had struck me about the Terminal ever since my first visit: the presence of guns. And the way people react—or I should say don't react, to their presence. There are always one or two Uzis placed on top of a table, leaning against the chimney or at the end of the bar. They belong to those khaki-uniformed soldiers in conversation with their girlfriends, some of whom are also in military outfits, each with colorful drinks before them. Nobody pays attention to either the uniforms or the weapons. This is normal. It has always been like this. First, there is military service, two years for women, three for men, with one free weekend out of two, and one full week's holiday every three months. After active service, men become reservists till the age of 55 and are called up for a total of 60 days annually after that. Each of these wild *zarooks* dancing in the Terminal could be required at any moment to go to war.

The result of this system is that Israel, although a small state of four million inhabitants (going on five, as pointed out by my Israeli translator), maintains a potential army of 514,000 fighters (174,000 professional soldiers and 340,000 reservists). An army of the people.

This dream of all the Communist countries in the world, from Nicaragua to China, was never realized better than here, a rare capitalist sanctuary on this troubled part of the planet. An intriguing paradox. "I know this seems weird to foreigners like you," explains Ofra, 21 years old, one of the sexy waitresses of the Terminal, "but for us, serving in the army is a natural obligation. It's in the army that one learns how to get on with others, how to suffer, how to

SIMON BESHT

have faith, and what Israel is really about. It's there also, by the way, that a lot of us have met our boyfriends and our mates."

Ofra was discharged from her two-year service a few days after the war started. She decided that she preferred working at night instead of staying home waiting for the alert. When she came to the bar looking for a job, she was still wearing her khaki trousers and duffle coat. Next day, wearing a black headband and a tight-fitting bodysuit, she "shalomed" her way between the crowded tables. Israel is a fighting country.

In my conversation with Oren, the cocky, defiant bartender at the Terminal, I became aware of the gap between us—we the spoiled children of the West and our Israeli cousins, the fighters. Oren is the survivor of the survivors, the ultimate anti-Scud rocker. Not only does he continue working, but he also plays guitar with his band, whenever he can. One evening at 6:00 P.M., as he was leaving the bar, he invited me to hear them perform. Before putting on his faded jeans jacket, I saw him fit a gun holster around his left shoulder.

"Why are you armed, Oren? Are you afraid of a holdup in the bar?"

"No, the bar is quiet. The gun is for the Arabs."

"The Arabs? But there are hardly any Arabs in Tel Aviv! This is not Jerusalem. It's safe here, isn't it?"

"Don't believe it. When the city functions normally, thousands of Palestinians come to work here. There have been some stabbings. But even worse, about a year ago a Palestinian suicide commando nearly hit the beach outside the city with its speedboats. Fortunately, the Israeli military stopped the operation before the terrorists landed on the sand."

"So does everybody in Tel Aviv carry a gun?"

"Anybody who can get a license does."

Oren's house is located on the main street at the end of the seafront. Inside, the living room is built of double walls in order to make it an adequate practice studio for musicians. His band, named Caen, is currently recording demo tapes on a four-track machine. It is difficult for a new band to make it in Israel. Twenty thousand copies constitute a hit here, but even if you sell that amount you can hardly make an adequate living. Oren and the three other musicians haven't canceled a single session since the beginning of this strange Scud war—they have remained steadfast. The band plays on. Their playing creates such a resounding noise that any siren in the world would go undetected. It even happened once—so what, is their attitude. The name of the band's first album, released two years ago, is *War*. The cover features a photo of a 6-year-old Israeli girl with blond hair carrying an automatic weapon.

"We don't write love songs," Oren explains in his bourbon-tainted voice. "We have a cause, and this is what makes us different from others, I guess. It's hard to live in this country. As a musician, of course. But also just as a human being. Yet I like it here, it's the best country in the world for me. This is home." Again, Oren points out that, ever since the first alert was sounded, he decided that not a single minute of his life would be disturbed by Saddam's threats. Even if it's chemical? "I wouldn't mind if a chemical missile landed near my home," Oren replies. "Maybe it will finally kill off all those fucking roaches I can't get rid of."

When the world is running down, you make the best of what's still around.

FRIDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 1, TEL AVIV WOKE up with a strange feeling of victory. It was as though each inhabitant felt—with his mask on and his attention directed to the army spokesman on TV—he or she had won the war. The two last Scuds fired by Saddam's troops fell far away from the city, in the occupied territories. The ground battle was about to begin in Kuwait, and the Iraqis were suffering one defeat after another, or so it seemed.

For the first time in 15 days, Israelis started going out again. On this Sabbath eve, an Israeli special war version of Saturday night fever, they gathered in reopened restaurants to sing songs of hope and glory. Tonight, other pubs besides the Terminal—the Picasso Bar, Matisse, even one called the Baghdad Cafe—did not close early with the approach of the threatening darkness.

I went back to the Terminal.

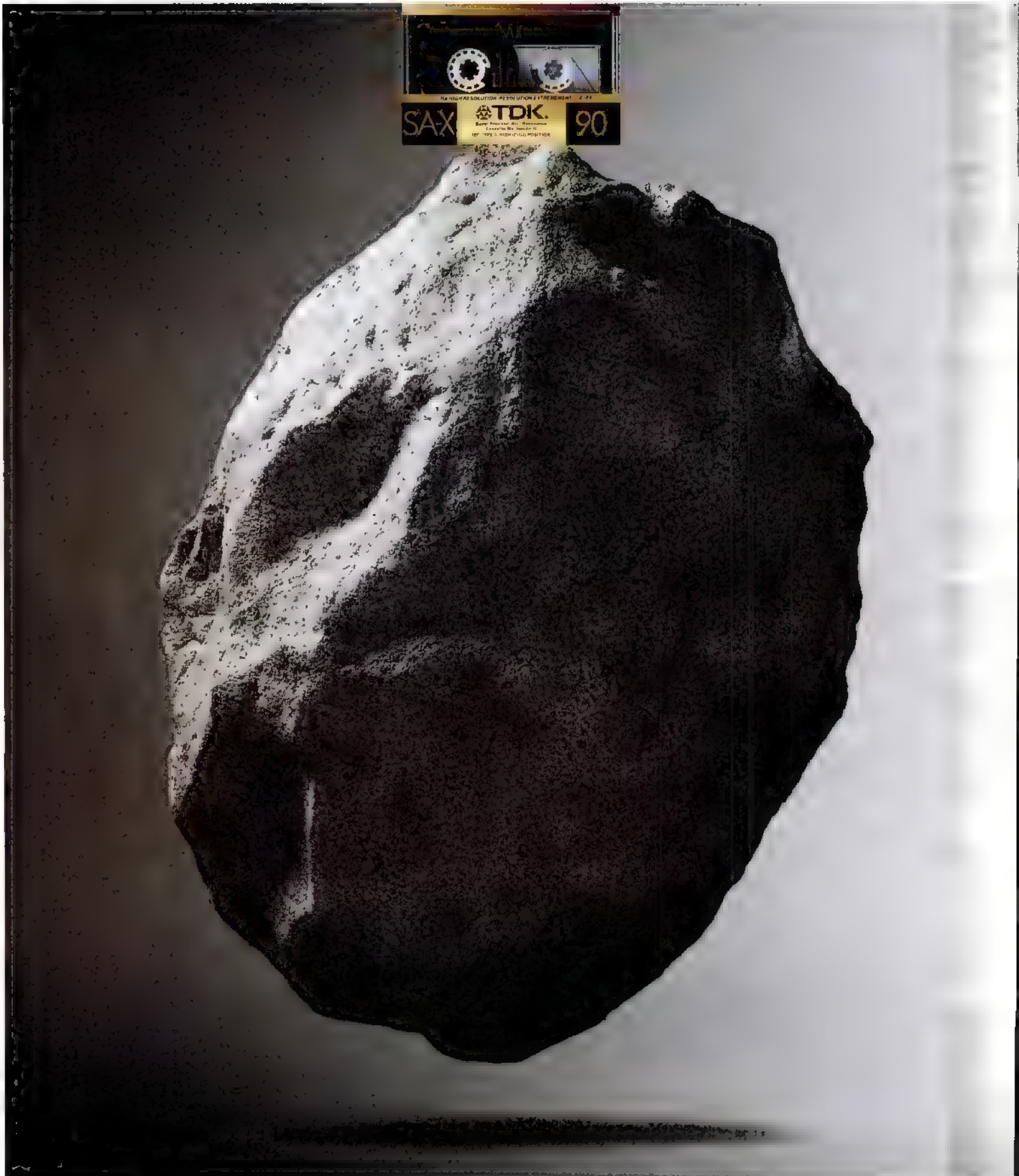
Movies, unfortunately, don't always end as well as they start. The bar was packed, and for the first time, people were lining up outside, hoping to get in good with the doorman. Inside, it was hell. Behind the bar, Oren was blasting one hard-rock song after another. Dozens of young guys with crew cuts moved in mechanical convulsions, glasses were flying, beer flowed endlessly. You could hear the screams even above the screeching music: "Fuck Saddam!" "Iraqi sons of bitches!" The frenzy reached a peak when Oren turned on the Terminal's cult song: Queen's "We Are the Champions." People started climbing on the tables. All of them—the crew cuts, the *zarooks*, Oren, Dadi, Ofra, Lori—two hundred people, swaying with alcohol, were shouting that they were the best, my friend, and that they would go and get "them" in the end.

Maybe they are the best, but this whole scene undermined some of the admiration I had felt for them. Yesterday's brothers in arms seemed transformed into belligerent ruffians. I felt at home in the Terminal when the mood was one of a defiant heroism. Now, it represented some sort of pre–football game macho bravado.

So long, Terminal. Nice meeting you. I'll come back if the fatal threat returns. Then, I know, your real heroes will reappear.

Dadi was at the door as I was leaving. "Hey, Frenchie, why are you packing so fast?" he asked. I told him why. He didn't like it. "I'm not going to try to convince you, but listen to me for a few minutes," he said, shaking his ponytail in anger. "A few months ago, when I was still in the army, I was on patrol duty in the Gaza Strip. As usual, a young Palestinian, about seventeen years old, threw stones at us. But this time, one of my colleagues was badly hit in the neck. We chased the kid, grabbed him, and dragged him to the car. Just before we got to the jeep, the whole village came out. About three hundred people surrounded us. Suddenly a woman in her thirties picked up a heavy rock, as big as a briefcase, and started running toward me, holding the rock above her head. Even when she was five meters away, I still thought she was bluffing, as the Arabs often do. But when she was three meters from me I raised my Uzi. At two meters, I fired. Yet my conscience is clear. I had to save my life. If I had to do it over again, I would not hesitate. Think about it. Many of the people who are going wild in the bar have undergone the same kind of experience. Sometimes, one needs to dance."

Word spreads around the city: The Terminal will stay open until it's been reduced to rubble. This is rock'n'roll resistance.



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fashion for peace

Fashion for Peace was hastily put together in the weeks following the first air attacks on Iraq in late January. ☮ No sane person wants this or any war, but that doesn't mean that the tragic occurrence of war is in all cases unjustified, or avoidable. The question of war's justifiability is too large and complex to answer with satisfaction. Of course we're against the war. Of course we're for the troops. As Sebastian Bach commented when he was photographed, "If you're for the troops, you have to be for bringing them home as soon as possible, not leaving them over there till they get killed." ☮ We wanted to respond to the war and the simultaneous cry for peace meaningfully, and we hope we have. SPIN asked some of the most talented fashion designers and artists to create original T-shirts that reflect their visions of peace. We then asked a wide and diverse range of pop-culture stars to model the shirts so we could sell them to raise money for relief of war victims. Despite the tight deadline to pull this off for this issue, the response and support was overwhelming, for which we thank everyone. ☮ Some of the people who posed for the following pictures vociferously oppose the war in their interviews, while others are ambivalent, but all are certain that our survival depends on a commitment in our personal and public lives to peace. Now you, the reader, can strike your own peace pose by ordering the T-shirts (see card following page 68). All profits will go directly to the American Red Cross, which has set up a special Gulf Crisis Emergency Fund for victims of the war. ☮ We hope this will be the first of many efforts coordinated through Fashion for Peace to raise money and help for all our brothers and sisters victimized by the terrible conflict in the Persian Gulf. ☮ Peace.

JOHN MELLENCAMP with his children

Peace—it's a lovely idea, isn't it? But I don't think governments have any vested interest in peace. It doesn't keep business going. We're just too wrapped up in global business. Man biting man has been the course of business for too long.

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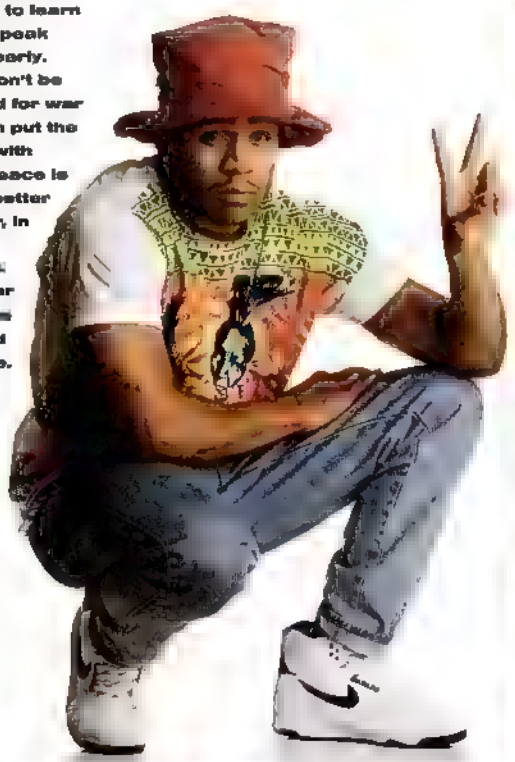
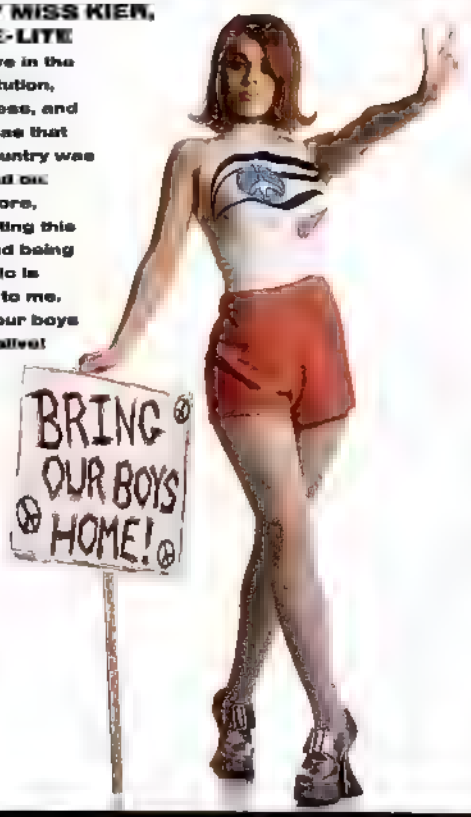
L.L. COOL J

We have to learn how to speak more clearly. There won't be any need for war if we can put the fire out with water. Peace is always better than war, in every instance. Every war should be replaced by peace.



LADY MISS KIER, DEEE-LITE

I believe in the Constitution, Congress, and the ideas that this country was founded on. Therefore, protesting this war and being patriotic is peace to me. Bring our boys home alive!



KIM GORDON, SONIC YOUTH

War is a form of male insanity. If women were the majority rulers, the earth would be much better taken care of. Now that women stand to be killed in combat, maybe people will wake up from the dream.

A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

It was prophesied that something like this would happen in the Scriptures. Peace when Allah comes back to save us all.

SEBASTIAN BACH, SKID ROW

People accuse rock'n'roll of just fucking around—and I'm certainly one who loves to fuck around—but right now I see something that I'm against and I think it's awful that 19-year-old kids are over there thinking any good ever comes of war. War is murder. George Bush is a fucking murderer, as much as Saddam. I'm for the troops, and the best way to support the troops is to get them out of there.

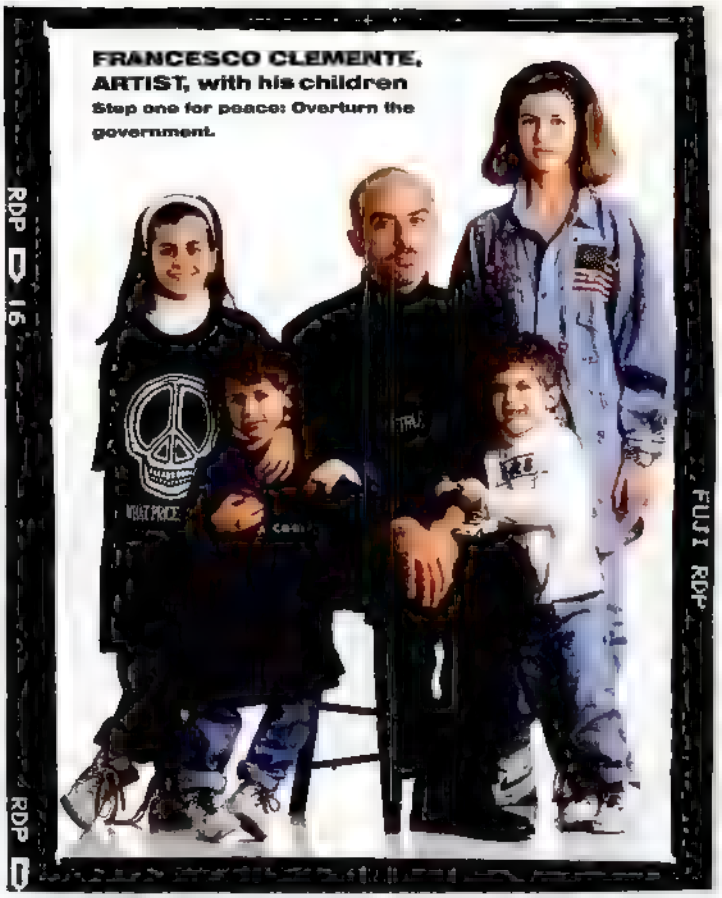
DEBORAH HARRY

The problem is that we don't have any female gods. Male-dominated religions don't emphasize negotiation. We need a human-race culture.

MICHAEL SCHMIDT, DESIGNER

We shouldn't have any illusions that war happens accidentally. It's planned, it's rehearsed. Everybody likes peace, but we won't have it until we realize who prepares for war and who practices peace.

SPIKE LEE, FILM DIRECTOR
What is peace? Peace is not sending U.S. troops to the desert to die over oil.



FRANCESCO CLEMENTE, ARTIST, with his children
Step one for peace: Overturn the government.

ZZ TOP
Just as the blues provides an impetus for one's emotional and artistic expression, so too, we suspect, would an environment of peace. We'd love to prove the theory someday soon.

LENNY KRAVITZ
Peace means all nations walking along and providing for each other, making a global effort to take care of each other and the earth.

Michael Zilpe

Marg Helgenberger

Mark Slaughter

Chong

David Cohan

MICHAEL STIPE, R.E.M.
Peace starts with acceptance of values and ideas different from our own. Start simple. Think big.

MARG HELGENBERGER, ACTRESS, *China Beach*
I just want people to start telling the truth, and I think when you start telling the truth you can achieve things through diplomatic means.

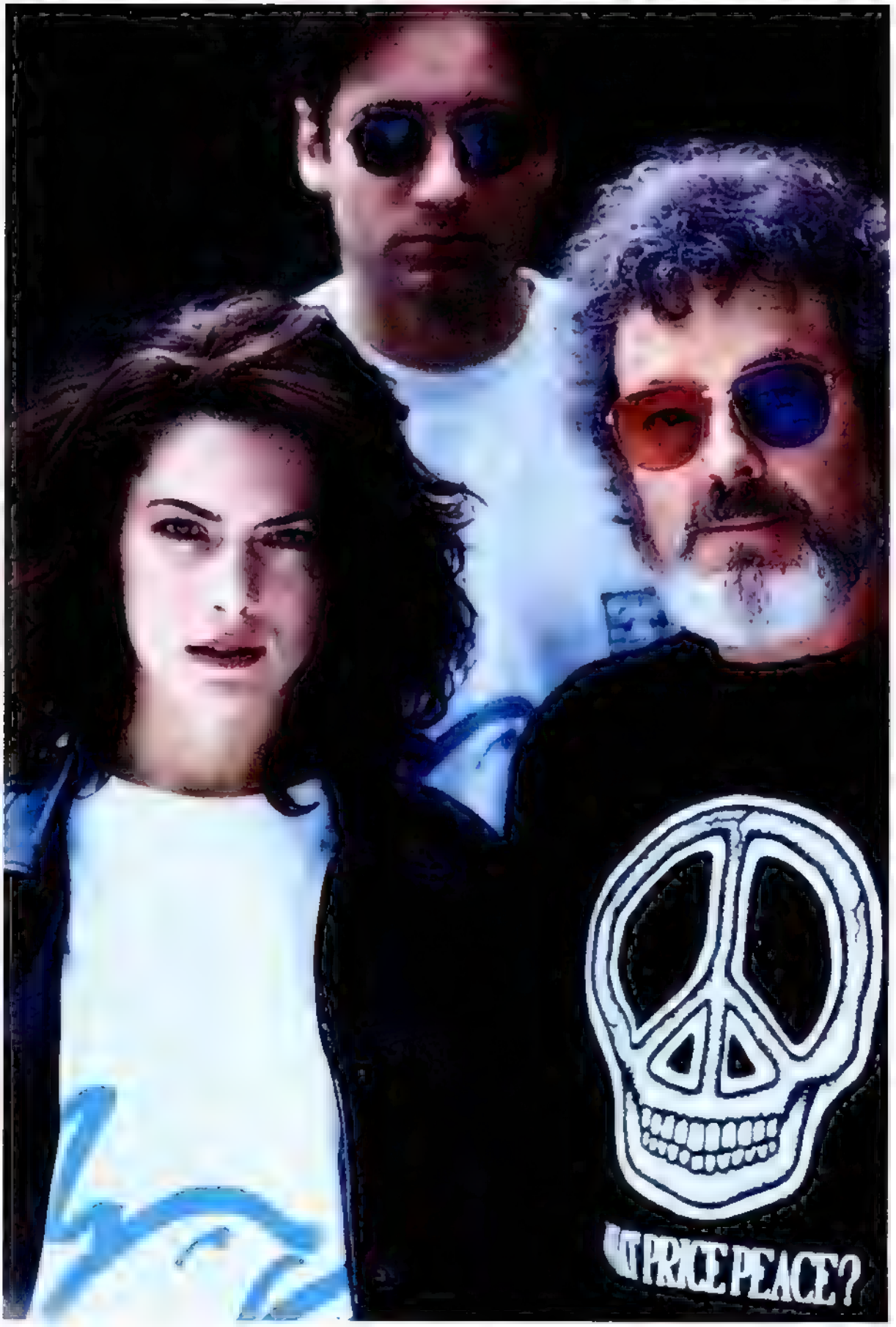
MARK SLAUGHTER, SLAUGHTER
I think it's really down to each person to be at peace with themselves to make peace in the whole world.

DAVID GAHAN, DEPECHE MODE
As long as there are politicians and religion—even at the highest place of religion—there are bad politics and there is war. It won't be the war that gets us—it will be the environment in the end.

LARA FLYNN BOYLE, ACTRESS, *Twin Peaks* (▸*left*)
How do you get at something that's not tangible? God only knows. It's not something you lose and try to get it back, I don't really know what it is.

RUSS TAMBLYN, ACTOR, *Twin Peaks* (▸*center*)
If you look down from above the planet, we'd be fighting ourselves. Every time you aim a gun at someone else you're basically aiming a gun at yourself. I'm in disagreement with anything that separates people, religion, nationality, and sex.

DAVID DUCHOVNY, ACTOR, *Twin Peaks* (▸*right*)
Peace is the freedom to pursue whatever it is you want to pursue without anyone telling you you can't, as long as you don't hurt anybody.



Tonyi Tonii Tonéi

Cree Summer

Martha Quinn

Michael Horse

Sheryl Lee

Eric Da Re

China Kantner

TONY! TONI! TONÉ!
Peace is everybody living in harmony, brothers in Oakland being able to party without fighting.

CREE SUMMER, ACTRESS, *A Different World*
Peace is a state of mind—one that usually is discovered in solitude, at which point I'm in no position to hurt anyone.

MARTHA QUINN, MTV
Peace is getting along with that which surrounds us, be it our ecosystem or our neighbors.

MICHAEL HORSE, ACTOR, *Twin Peaks*
Peace is understanding other people's cultures. Our legacy upon this planet is to elevate ourselves above dealing with things in the short term, because it's just a short answer.

SHERYL LEE, ACTRESS, *Twin Peaks*
We have to start by finding peace within ourselves first. Then, I think, it will just happen.

ERIC DA RE, ACTOR *Twin Peaks*
Peace will be attainable as soon as money doesn't remain the most important factor. Until that day comes I don't think peace is foreseeable.

CHINA KANTER, MTV
Peace is a world in which all life is essential to the growth of this planet. We are the only animals that consume more than we need. Stop the greed.

MICHAEL BORDIN, FAITH NO MORE (above, *left*)
Peace is everybody staying the hell out of everybody else's business.

JELLO BIAFRA (above)
Peace means human beings overcoming their animal instincts for territory and living together—both on a personal and global basis.

JON ANDERSON, YES, and daughter DEBORAH
We have to learn to live beyond war and that's a fact.

PAULY SHORE, MTV
The point of peace is to be happy with one another and not have negative vibes toward other people.

OFRA HAZA
The last decade was so wonderful, the wall fall down and Mandela was freed. Unfortunately now we start with Saddam, but I will not give up to hope and pray to God that peace will come.

JOHNETTE NAPOLITANO, CONCRETE BLONDE
Peace is getting up in the middle of the night and plugging in my guitar, putting on a pot of coffee and having my cat. That's real peaceful to me.

DE LA SOUL
Peace? The word is reality—wake up to what is going on around you. Peace is being used as a scapegoat to what should really be done. Peace is also death once you're dead and alone—that's peaceful.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, JOHN FRUSCIANTE: Peace is waking up, lighting a cigarette, and listening to *Trout Mask Replica* by Captain Beefheart first thing in the morning. **CHAD SMITH:** Peace is being in the privacy of your own vehicle. **FLEA:** Peace is bouncing my baby girl naked on my belly. **ANTHONY KIEDIS:** Peace is the look in my dog's eyes when I kiss him on the nose.

ANGELO MOORE, FISHBONE
Peace is everybody getting along with everybody else.

DICK RUDE, TOO FREE STOOGES
Peace is something good on Saturday night.

FASHION FOR PEACE

THE T-SHIRT DESIGNERS: Isaac Mizrahi, Stephen Sprouse, Juan Pisonero and Martin Price/Giorgio di Sant'Angelo, Mark Kostabi, Michael Roman, Marc Jacobs/Perry Ellis, Gordon Henderson.

LOS ANGELES: Lenny Kravitz, Michael Stipe, Marg and Hugh Helgenberger, Michael Hersz, Sheryl Lee, Eric Da Re, Cree Summer, Martha Quinn, Lara Flynn Boyle, David Duchovny, Russ Tamblyn, Chene, David Gahan, Mark Slaughter, Jon and Deborah Anderson, Pauly Shore, Ofra Haza, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Angelo Moore, Dick Rude, Johnnette, and Little Steven.

Photographer: Anton Corbijn; Styling: Chene; Coordinator: Vikki Deger; Hair/Makeup: Mitzi Spallas; Location: Hotel Shangri-la.

NEW YORK: L.L. Cool J, Lady Miss Kier, A Tribe Called Quest, Kim Gordon, Sebastian Bach, Deborah Harry, Michael Schmidt, Spike Lee, Francisca Clemente, and children.

Photographer: Greg Watermann; Styling: Jill Revson; Hair/Makeup: Ezequiel de la Rosa.

SAN FRANCISCO: China Kantner, Michael Berdin, Jello Biafra, and Tenyl Tanil Toné!

Photographer: Christine Alicino; Styling: Chene; Hair: Eric Webb; Makeup: Renee Caldwell

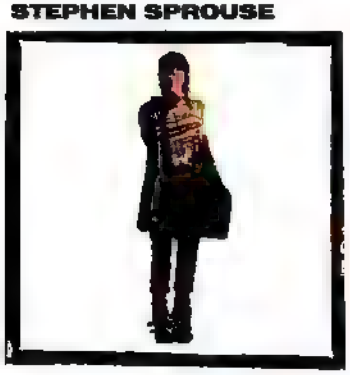
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS: Marc Hauser/John Mellencamp; Nick Vaccaro/ZZ Top; Stephen Sprouse/De La Soul.

SPECIAL THANKS TO the SPIN/Fashion for Peace A-Team: Chene, Cyndy Johnson, Jill Revson AND TO: Nancy Sanders, Paula Shimatsu-U, Greg Werckman, Linda Livingston, Debbie Robbins, Scott McGhee, Lindy Goetz, Jeff Wagner, Bob Merlis, David Millman, Mike Gormley, Kim Kaiman, Linda Alexander, Cindy Guagenti, Aloni Bezalel, Ron Carter, Brooke Johnson, Danny Goldberg, Jack Healey, Todd Williams, Harry Sandler, Brooke Williams, Liz Derringer, Sheryl Jones, John Silva & Tim, Laura Hynes, Nina & Mariza, Linda Donahue, Cathy Sheemaker, Leyla Turkkan, Ursula Smith, Desirée Jelleretie, Little Steven, John Sykes, Leslie Glatter, Zoe, Dawn Bridges, Leslie Castenuella, Peter Arnell, Kathy Gillis, and Children Mellencamp: Teddi Je & Justice.

ADDITIONAL CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES: Sunglasses—L.A. Eyeworks, Ray-Ban, Gargoyles, Allegra. Suntan Lotion—Bain de Soleil. *Page 64:* Francesca Clemente's children's shorts from Café Clothing, Esprit. *Page 66:* Hugh Helgenberger wears Esprit; Martha Quinn's shirt by New Age. *Page 67:* David Duchovny and Lara Flynn Boyle wear Van Grack. *Page 9:* Chene's shirt by Camp Beverly Hills. *Page 70:* Deborah Anderson's shirt by Yes. T-Shirts printed by Dea Finch.

ISAAC MIZRAHI

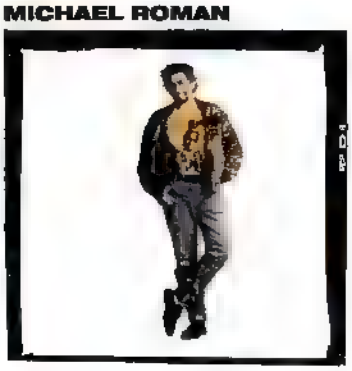
STEPHEN SPROUSE



JUAN PISONERO AND MARTIN PRICE/GIORGIO DI SANT'ANGELO

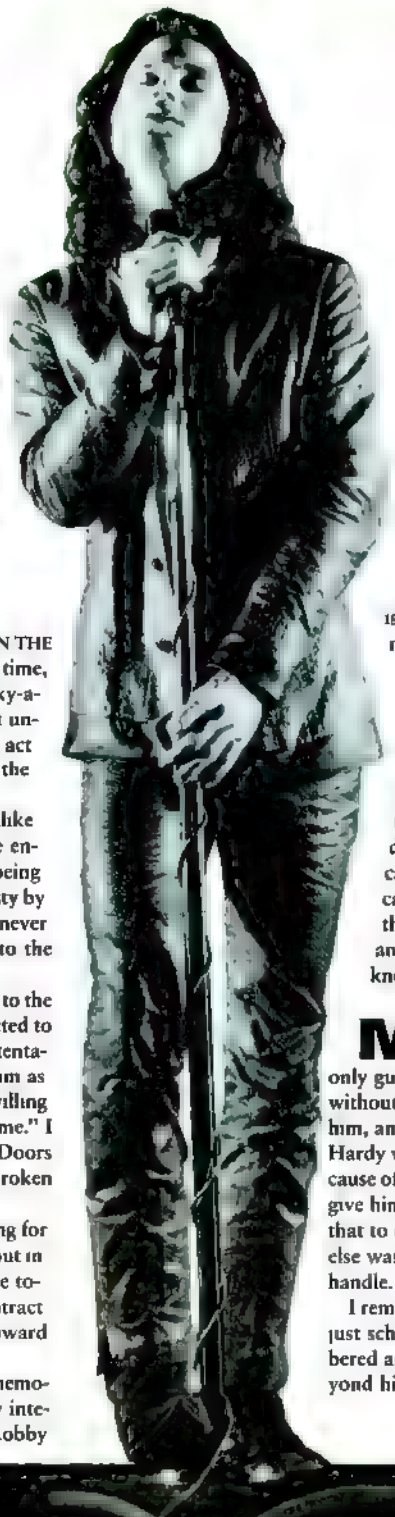
MARK KOSTABI

MICHAEL ROMAN



LITTLE STEVEN
I think it would be nice if all arms sales were immediately made illegal, especially on an international level. Second thing is to restore a balance as far as how we live our lives, and that means we need to stop using oil and begin to live life a little more in harmony. We have to realize that we as a race of people are not separated from this planet and we need to start living that way.

MEMORIES OF MORRISON



Remembering Jim Morrison is to be reminded of his contradictions: the magic and the misery, the beatific and horrific. Hot on the heels of Oliver Stone's new film about the Doors, JAC HOLZMAN, Elektra Records founder and chairman from 1950 to 1973, takes us back.

I DRAGGED MY TIRED TAIL OFF AN AMERICAN AIRLINES 707 IN THE late spring of 1966 to greet Los Angeles at 11:00 P.M. Pacific time, 2:00 A.M. New York metabolism time, and dashed for the Whisky-a-Go-Go where Love was performing. Love was one of the great underground rock acts of L.A.—in fact, the only good unsigned act when I began foraging for new groups on behalf of Elektra in the mid-'60s.

The Whisky-a-Go-Go was a dark and cavernous club, not unlike the black hole of Calcutta, but with a cover charge. Near the entrance to the stage stood Love's lead singer, Arthur Lee, who, being *numero uno* on the underground scene, was enjoying his celebrity by granting his imprimatur to a new group he found worthy. I had never heard of this group, but I stayed through Arthur's set and into the Doors'.

Morrison made no impression whatsoever. I was more drawn to the classical figurings of keyboardist Ray Manzarek and was attracted to the leanness of the music. The lead singer seemed reclusive and tentative, as if preserving himself. There was nothing that tagged him as special, but there was a subtle invitation to "play," if you were willing to do so on his terms. It was only later that I sensed Jim's "game." I was being tested to see if my interest was real or ephemeral. The Doors had been loosely signed to Columbia and then, after a string of broken promises, let go. It was a real downer.

Clearly I chose to play, because I kept going back every evening for the entire week, and on the fifth night, Morrison really moved out in front, and on "The Alabama Song" and "The End" it all came together—so much so that I immediately offered the group a contract and went through the agony of a summer trying to nurse them toward signing it, which did not occur until several months later.

My memories of Morrison are distinctly different from my memories of the band, because although on record they were totally integrated, in life there were really two entities—Ray Manzarek-Robby Krieger-John Densmore and Jim Morrison, separate and apart.

Jim and I were never really close friends, but there was a fundamental trust between us. He sensed that I would serve him and the band best by not being a part of the entourage, by preserving my objectivity, and by being available as needed "in the clutch."

During the making of the famous first album I would come by the studio most every evening, after things had well settled in. The band was playing in the large open studio space of Sunset Sound, with Jim in an isolation booth to prevent voice leakage onto the instrumental tracks. It was a perfect metaphor.

By the standards of 1966, the sessions were expensive. I had signed the group for an advance of $5,000—high in those days—and lavished almost another $5,000 in recording costs, but it was clear from what was happening musically, under the superlative guidance of Paul Rothchild and Bruce Botnick, that important music was being made. I slipped into the studio during the middle of "The End," becoming totally caught up in that transcendent moment. As the song came to *its* end and the final notes shimmered into silence, the tension in the control room was palpable. God forbid anybody knock over a mike stand or make a noise. We knew magic when it happened.

MORRISON WAS EXTRAORDINARILY WELL READ, thoughtful, funny, and an absolute devil. He is the only guy I ever knew who could hit a police car—drunk and without a driver's license—and get away with it. There was, in him, an inherent boyish innocence not unlike that of an Andy Hardy who hits a baseball through the parish window and because of an inner glow is forgiven. And Jim's friends would forgive him most anything. His demons were so near the surface that to call Jim on behavior you would not tolerate in anyone else was to *feel* you were adding more pressure than he could handle.

I remember sitting with Jim in a bar near the Elektra studios just schmoozing about life and how he wanted to be remembered as a poet—how this rock'n'roll thing had gotten far beyond his ability to control the public's perception of him. He

continued on page 103

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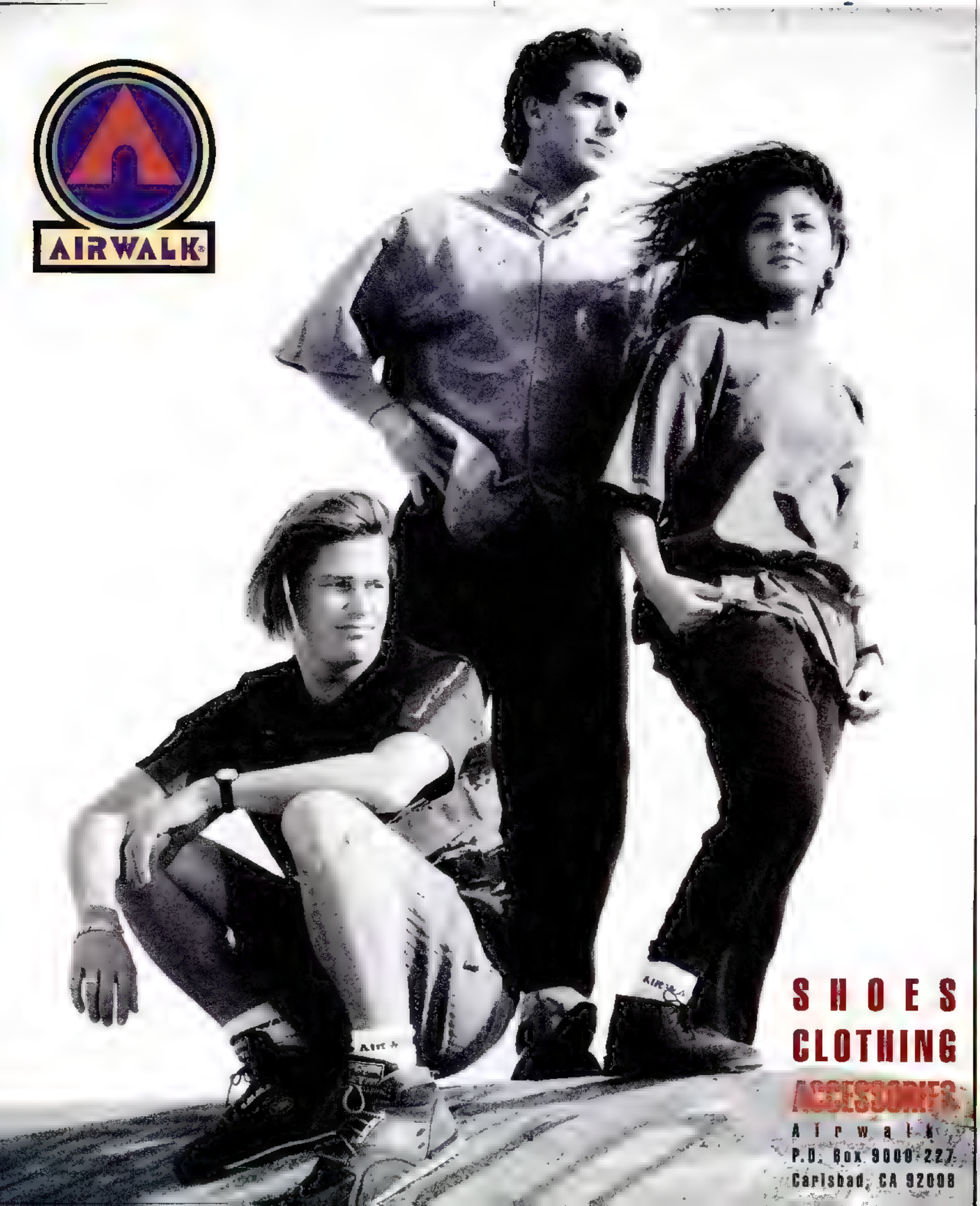
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SELLING BRUTAL BEATS

Is Chicago label Wax Trax a purveyor of dance music you can't dance to, or the future of post-guitar rock'n'roll? JIM GREER tries to figure it out.

CHICAGO IS A STRANGE AND WONDERFUL PLACE, A NEAR-ICONIC AMERICAN CITY WHICH HAS BIRTHED ANY NUMBER OF AMERICAN icons, from Saul Bellow to Wrigley Field to Siskel and Ebert to really bad pizza. To this list we'll soon add house music and Wax Trax Records.

The two have very little in common besides a fondness for drum machines, but it's the differences, paradoxically, that give cause for comparison. Whereas house, at its inception, was primarily the music of a repressed underclass—gay black males—the music Wax Trax puts out is the product, by and large, of an unrepressed but monumentally bored white middle and upper-middle class. As a result, the content and intent of the latter are the antithesis of house. Where house is fundamentally a music of liberation, of spiritualized escapism, most Wax Trax product espouses alienation, as well as an unremitting nihilism of the sort you used to expect from hardcore punk bands like Black Flag or the Germs.

But Wax Trax's brand of postindustrial dancecore is a lot more popular than hardcore ever was—if you measure popularity in terms of record sales and concert attendance. And for the life of me, as well as most of my colleagues, I can't figure out why. I mean, my wife likes to jump rope to it, but I find it hard to believe that the success of much of the Wax Trax catalog depends on its aerobic usefulness. And anyway, she's weird.

Of course, it doesn't really matter if music journalists can't figure out why Wax Trax bands are so popular—the label has achieved a remarkable level of success with very little critical attention. Other

Multimedia anarchists Meat Beat Manifesto recently left the label for supposedly greener pastures.

GRAPHIC BY NANCY LEOPARD

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prominent independent labels, such as early-'80s SST and mid-'80s Homestead, gained a significant degree of notoriety in the rock press on the basis of critical acclaim, but most of their acts caused scarcely a ripple in the marketplace. In addition, those labels (especially SST, which was a direct outgrowth of the hardcore movement) were reactions to scenes-in-progress, whereas Wax Trax at least gives the impression of creating its own scene. In keeping with its midwestern origins, it's a populist label (i.e., its bands actually sell records).

WAX TRAX BANDS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE or two "characters," are designed to be relatively faceless. They have to be—if you were to actually get to know the people behind the often unrelentingly brutal aural as-

sault, and found that they were generally nice, polite, mild-mannered geeks, some of the power of their music would be lost.

Clockwise from top left: Jim Thirlwell of Foetus, Psychic TV's Genesis P Orridge and the infamous Revolting Cocks, a.k.a Revco

Which brings us to Alain (or "Alien," as he sometimes likes to be known) Jourgensen, the company's decidedly unfaceless cofounder and "house producer." Much of the attention the label does get is a direct result of Jourgensen's antics: He makes no secret of his varied and copious drug use, and in contrast to the carefully orchestrated mouthings of most of today's image-conscious performers, will say pretty much anything that comes to mind. He also has developed a reputation for violence.

"People come backstage and accidentally throw their faces into your fist and call their lawyer," he says, although he also claims, "I've never lost a court case. I could have my own *Alien Law* show."

Jourgensen is of course also the founding member of Ministry, Wax Trax's first real success. (Ministry's 12-inch of "Cold Life" sold 5,000 copies in its first year; the band's "All Day in Halloween" 12-inch went on to sell well over 100,000 copies.) He now spreads himself across nearly a dozen different, though thematically related, projects: from techno-cowboy band The Revolting Cocks to recent collaborations with Jello Biafra and Ian MacKaye. He bristles, as do without exception the rest of the Wax Trax staff, at any attempt to pigeonhole the output of the label.

"It's erotic, neurotic, psychotic, cyberaggressivo, new-beat, dance country new-wave punk with a metal edge," he suggests. "And just a touch of insanity," he adds with a smirk.

The fact is, while on close inspection Wax Trax's bands are a varied lot, their surface homogeneity is closer to the truth than anyone at the label likes to admit. Quite simply, a lot of it sounds a lot alike. This is not necessarily a bad thing: A lot of hardcore bands sounded a lot alike, too, which helped create a sense of identity among their devotees. The same goes for Wax Trax. Its fans don't just like specific bands on the label, they like the label as an entity. They plaster leather jackets with Wax Trax stickers, buy Wax Trax T-shirts, go to Wax Trax shows, shop for records in the Wax Trax section of their favorite record store.

The label is now over a decade old, and employs 25 people, some of whom are or were in Wax Trax bands. Its catalog consists of over 160 releases and grows at the rate of 5 to 10 new releases per month, a fantastic (and ultimately debilitating) number for a small independent label.

"Money comes in bucketfuls and goes out in dumptruck loads," says Wax Trax president Jim Nash. "We're being swallowed up by our releases. But Al has a recording idea every time he walks in the door. How can I say no? I'm a vinyl junkie.

"You know, when 'Cold Life' sold three thousand copies we said, 'We're Warner Bros., we're there,'" Nash continues. "That was when two people ran Wax Trax out of the back of a record store. Now, for the first time, we're turning down releases. We need to step back a little bit. We still want a company where seven or eight thousand copies makes you happy, but it's hard to keep true to that concept."

It may become even harder. The label is reportedly close to signing a distribution deal with Warner Bros. that would give them access to the powerful network of a major label, but which at the same time threatens to dilute some of what makes the label special.

"We think a deal of that sort would not be totally bad for this label," says Nash. "I really believe a band like KLF, with improved distribution and co-promotion with a major, could sell 250,000 copies. Signing with a major is not an easy thing to do. It's almost heartbreaking. But I'm sick of developing bands for the majors and not getting anything back. We lost Ministry to Sire, and we just lost Front 242 to Epic. We got nothing out of either deal.

"But I guess that's the way it's always been. Every significant form of music was born out of the indie scene. It was Sun Records that put out Presley, after all. The first rap records, the first soul records—Motown was an indie. And now industrial, or whatever you want to call it. If the development of new music was up to the major labels, we'd be listening to the 1991 remix of 'How Much Is That Doggie in the Window.'

"In 1963, I believe it was possible for an indie label to have a number one hit. But not now, not the way this business is structured. Nonetheless, I really don't think a major label affiliation would change the kinds of bands we sign or how we treat them."

Wax Trax fans like the label as an entity. They plaster leather jackets with Wax Trax stickers, buy Wax Trax T-shirts, go to Wax Trax shows, shop for records in the Wax Trax section of their favorite record store.

WHEN I VISITED THE WAX TRAX OFFICE RECENTLY, the staff kept playing one of its recent signings, a band called Wreck that did not fit the standard Wax Trax mold at all. It sounded like a rock band to me, a pretty good one but nothing—to my less-than-attentive ears—special.

That doesn't really matter either, except that it's an example of an ongoing process of diversification that the label seems unduly proud of. Their adventurousness in signing less-commercial acts such as the Young Gods and Foetus should be applauded, but even these bands don't stray far from the Wax Trax aesthetic—all are decidedly nonrock.

The danger I see in branching out into unfamiliar territory is that Wax Trax might lose its focus, and with it the loyalty of its growing legion of fans. "There is strength in our identity," says Nash. With the possibly intrusive presence of a major-label deal looming in the future, and with the growing trend towards diversity in the label's roster, that identity may become more difficult to maintain. Then again, what do I know?

Reporting by Staci Bonner.

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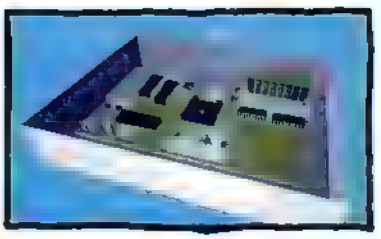


virtual kool-aid acid test

Virtual reality, the technofetish of the moment, has the makings of a cultural revolution not seen since the '60s. We sent JULIAN DIBBELL to Cyberthon, a 24-hour gathering of the faithful in San Francisco.

CALL US A TRIBE: THE GROWING SUBSET OF the American population for whom the technology of the information age amounts to more than just productivity enhancement. For us, computers, fiber optics, fax machines, all are emissaries from a near future, longed after with a fervor approaching the spiritual, the sexual, and/or the neurotic. And so far, no single device has come as close to being our Holy Grail as the one called virtual reality—the world inside a computer.

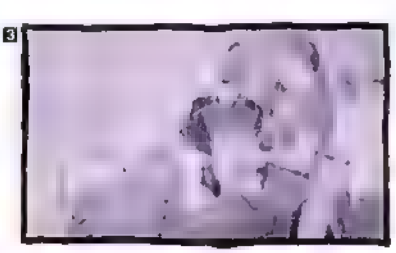
Descended on one side from a long line of largely military tools—wind tunnels, flight simulators, computer modeling methods—virtual reality also owes its existence to more familiar forms of simulation technology, like storytelling, fantasy, hype. The concept entered the popular consciousness as science fiction, in William Gibson's 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, which envisioned the world data network of the future as a colorful, three-dimensional "consensual hallucination" known as cyberspace and accessed via direct brain-to-machine transmissions. Within a few years of the novel's publication, news of a real-life version of the cyberspace interface, implemented via televisual goggles and motion-sensitive gloves, was causing sparks. By mid-1990, the sparks had grown into a media brushfire, with stories on virtual reality popping up in *Time*, SPIN, and *Variety*; on *ABC News* and on the front page of the *New York Times*.

And among the members of the tribe, curiosity about the new technology was reaching a feverish state. In June 1990, the practical-minded ecohippie types at the Whole Earth Institute in Sausalito, California, announced an emergency measure: Cyberthon, a 24-hour virtual-reality conference and expo gathering the field's leading thinkers and developers, was to be held in San Francisco from noon on October 6 to noon on October 7.

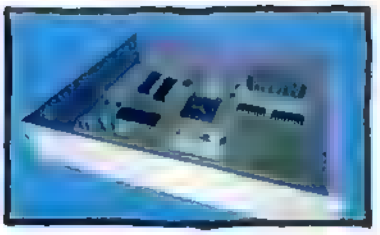
For the going rate of $350, I bought one of the last of the 339 tickets sold, and flew 3,000 miles to be there.

NAVIGATING THE 'THON WAS LIKE TRYING TO squeeze through some Ridley Scott vision of 1998. There were too many bodies moving too slowly through a labyrinth of stalls packed with cables and outlandish gadgetry; warm, stagnant air hung heavy with the smell of catered lunch meats and veggie dip.

There were only three full goggles-and-glove systems, and access to them was in such demand that the organizers decided to ration out usage through hourly lotteries. (One of the systems, the famous VPL rig, wasn't even on-site: If you won the lottery, you had to take a half-hour van ride to VPL Research's offices deep in Silicon Valley.) The remaining displays were fragmentary glimpses of a future wonder-gizmo still slowly pulling itself together. A company called TiNi Alloy showed off a ticklish fingertips attachment that lets users "feel" virtual surfaces that exist only as data lodged in an upscale PC. Off in the game room a mohawk-headed kid hovered obsessively around Atari's brilliant car-simulator, Hard Drivin', by far the most popular demo there. Near the entrance of the maze, I spotted cyberpunk science-fiction writer Bruce Sterling playing with Fake Space Labs' stereoscopic viewer that remote-controls a swiveling camera stationed a few feet away—a primitive taste of "telepresence" techniques that will one day allow virtual travelers to possess the bodies of distant robots over the phone lines. "Gaak!" he squealed when he swiveled and saw himself through the eyes of the robo-cam. "Subjectivity fragmentation! Sub-frag alert! Sub-frag alert!"



1 As real as it gets: Atari's Hard Drivin' race-car simulation was the life of the party 2 'Scuse me while I kiss the sky: Cyberthon's main stage, where it all went down. 3 Metaphysical entities: Neobohos learn to create the worlds. 4 Sub-frag alert!: A 'thongoer's cyber-double peers out of the screen of the Mandala Virtual Worlds System



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Big fun. Still, if all I'd wanted were quality shards of proto-VR technology, I could have played Hard Drivin' for a quarter at my local arcade. The Whole Earthers had advertised hands-on fun with the gadgetry as a main attraction, but anyone hip to the gap between the state-of-the-art and the swirl of expectations surrounding it knew that Cyberthon mattered more as a cultural event than a technological one.

Not that it was easy to tell the difference anymore. Ever since Apple Computer's surprise attack on the market dominance of the mainframe, advances in information technology have been feeding the parasitic growth of a small, technology-loving neobohemia, galvanized by the microchip as its forebearers were galvanized by drugs in the '60s, or maybe by punk rock in the '70s. While captains of industry creamed in their undies at the prospect of a chip-driven streamlining of the status quo, sci-fi geeks, avant-garde artists, restless radicals, new age theory spinners, and enlightened captains of industry were plunging into the hacker vision of a world utterly transformed by computers. A world in which a vast, many-noded network distributes power and beauty equally to all—or, at worst, gives rise to a new kind of bewildering complexity that is bound, at any rate, to be more amusing than the way things are organized now.

The most articulate and charismatic representative of the neobohos is a man named John Perry Barlow. Grateful Dead lyricist, lapsed Mormon, onetime cattle rancher, self-described professional technocrank, cofounder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (a well-funded group devoted to freedom of information in the age of digital networks), and author of an unpublished work-in-progress on computers and consciousness titled *Everything We Know Is Wrong*, Barlow feels the imminence of the new world all around us—in the modern web of internationally linked computers, in the electronic dimension your money inhabits when it isn't in your wallet. It's everywhere, in fact. So what's so new about virtual reality? "It allows people to inhabit cyberspace, rather than just think about it," says Barlow.

Hence VR's magnetizing appeal among the technophilic underground, and hence Cyberthon's potential to focus the energies of the new counterculture into a moment of electrifying self-consciousness. Born-in-the-'60s brat that I am, I snickered when I learned that the Cyberthon guest list would be studded with hand-me-down icons such as Timothy Leary (reborn as a cyberprophet and computer software designer) and Wavy Gravy (the hippie Clarabel who ran security at Woodstock and was now running for a seat on the Berkeley city council). But secretly I was thrilled. Secretly I wanted a Woodstock of my own.

As I stood outside after my first pass through the bowels of the beast, though, I wasn't sure I'd get it. Not to say that the crowd looked any straighter than I'd expected—though racially the place was lily-white (save for a smattering of Japanese); age groups were widely represented, with 27-to-34 holding down the median, suits were a rare sight, hair grew in various lengths and directions, and the odd Sonic Youth T-shirt was in evidence. It was just that everyone seemed so, I don't know, so together, so purposeful, so . . . public television. And those that didn't just seemed as dazed and confused as I was. I'd flown all this way to help make cultural history and ended up at a cross between a trade show and a Renaissance fair.

I headed back inside. On the main stage, a together and purposeful former Air Force officer named Tom Furness was tracing some of the roots of VR back to his work developing a look-and-shoot virtual cockpit for fighter pilots during the Vietnam War. Furness is a nice guy. In the last year he has quit the Air Force and started an institute in Washington state geared toward developing practical applications of the pilots display for other nice guys, like firemen and anesthesiologists and handicapped people. He took a sobering long view and said things such as "I've been in this business for 24 years. It's not a flash in the pan; things won't happen instantaneously. We need to proceed scientifically, methodically."

True enough, but I was looking for escape velocity, and this wasn't it. Scoping further down the roster of scheduled speakers, I envisioned an endless parade of news about the nifty, pragmatic VR applications now being thought up and worked out: architects walking around in projected buildings before even breaking ground, chemists grabbing and manipulating sophisticated computer models of molecules, surgeons-to-be training on virtual bodies rather than real cadavers. All very cool, and all documented to death in the reams of press and press releases the VR boomlet was generating. I decided to stay away from the main stage for a while.

I wandered deep in the stifling heart of the maze and stumbled into the private stall of R.U. Sirius. A gnome-like figure with shoulder blade–length hair and an irremovable gray fedora from which, like a third eye, stares a tiny photo-button of Andy Warhol, R.U. Sirius (a.k.a.

Like scuba diving in a cartoon, VPL's full-featured bodysuit

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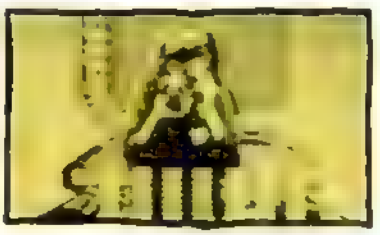

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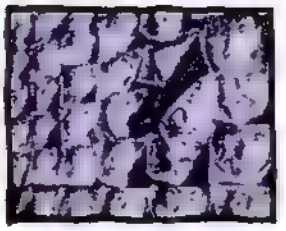
5 Queuing up to trip. Sense-8's goggles-and-glove system.

6 Cyber-face painting created by brushing ink over tracings of digitized faces.



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Ken Goffman) is a 37-year-old ex-Yippie and editor of the Berkeley-based quarterly "mutazine" *Mondo 2000*, a chronicle of the new cultural milieu growing up around the computer revolution.

"R.U., man!" I said. "Like, when do we start taking our clothes off and dancing in the mud?"

"Yeah," he said uneasily, looking half at me and half at the close walls of this forlorn stall he'd been allotted to hawk the magazine in. His smile was wan and queasy, sweat dripped out from under his hat. He didn't look so hot. If R.U. Sirius was not having a good time, my fantasies of a high-tech Woodstock were doomed.

Disconsolate, I moped out of the maze only to discover that my name had been drawn in a recent lottery to ride the magical mystery van to VPL.

IT WAS A TYPICALLY SUNLESS DAY IN SEATTLE, and I was floating high above Puget Sound, a disembodied point of data. Below me the city skyline was a cluster of building blocks; two feet ahead my hand hovered like a pet satellite. I aimed my finger downward and descended slowly, passing the Space Needle so close I could hear the sounds of conversations from inside; then I plunged into the blue waters of the bay to chase a whale swimming just below the surface.

Up and out again, I floated skyward toward a giant purple keyhole hanging about where the sun should have been. Passing through the keyhole, I emerged in a Danish-modern studio apartment, floated across it to another keyhole and out into a romper room cluttered with Wonderlandish features. I plucked a twirling banana from midair and handed it to a duck bobbing in a hot tub. I grabbed a top hat—it turned into a dozen roses. I soared hundreds of feet above the room in hot pursuit of a mechanical bird twisting its way up through a tunnel of colorful bubbles, then burst out into clear sky and onward, up to a lonely little potato chip of a cloud, which I climbed inside for a brief moment of reflection.

This was some heavy shit, wasn't it? This was what mystics had talked about for centuries, right? I had become pure energy, pure information. No longer bound by gravity's rainbow or matter's brick wall, I was traveling as if by force of thought, through worlds familiar and worlds only imagined

Advances in information technology have been feeding the growth of a neobohemia, galvanized by the microchip as its forebears were galvanized by drugs in the '60s.

Well, sort of. VPL Research, Inc., makes the most advanced virtual reality system available commercially, and even so it leaves plenty of room for improvement. Resolution on the two LCD display screens pressed up against my eyes was grainy, and keeping the two images superimposed sometimes got as eyeball-straining as watching a 3-D movie. A pair of hundred thousand dollar IRIS-advanced graphics processors pumped the virtual worlds out of a souped-up Macintosh IIx and into my goggles at top speeds, with position sensors on my headset and my right-hand DataGlove telling the computers 60 times a second just what I was looking at or pointing to—but still the movements of my virtual surroundings lagged naggingly and jerkily behind my own. The worlds themselves were sharp-lined and brightly colored and also crudely geometric and unnervingly clean. If you thought about it enough, you could convince yourself that moving through this space had a lot in common with riding on wings of light and other such transcendent experiences—but what it *felt* like was scuba-diving in a cartoon.

I didn't have time for disappointment, though. In a few years the computer industry's annual doubling of processing-power-per-dollar will render my complaints small-minded. Detail and resolution will soon approach photorealism, motion will speed up and smooth out to balletic grace, images will be laser-projected directly onto the retina, and the whole contraption will be available at Radio Shack for two weeks' salary.

And anyway, there was something more interesting going on right now back at the main event, and I was anxious to return. If Cyberthon was my shot at Woodstock, then at the moment I was missing the equivalent of Hendrix's set. Jaron Lanier, the 30-year-old founder of VPL and ranking star of the virtual reality scene, was scheduled to speak at 8:00 P.M. By the time I wedged into the SRO crowd and spotted his leonine blond dreadlocks and scruffy beard, his Buddha-like smile and figure to match, Lanier was already taking questions from the floor.

To judge from the rapturous attention of the audience, Lanier had been making his usual intoxicating promises again. Virtual reality, he likes to tell people, will be the death of passive information delivery systems like television. Virtual reality will extend today's interactive medium par excellence, the telephone, into a multisensory realm of constant invention. In time, virtual reality's users will grow so adept at creating and recreating worlds and objects that communication will slough off its clumsy dependence on language and blossom into a rich, fluid game of show and tell. Virtual reality will be an anarchist's dream, a realm where things are infinitely abundant, property loses its meaning, and creativity is the only dependable form of capital.

Lanier talks a beautiful game, but in the end he provides no guarantees that virtual reality won't simply turn out to be, in William Gibson's words and worst nightmare, "like freebasing American television." Indeed, the billions of dollars and yen currently riding on passive information-delivery systems would seem to predict that very future.

But Lanier harbors no illusions that his predictions are "realistic": "People get on my case about optimism sometimes, and let me be real clear about

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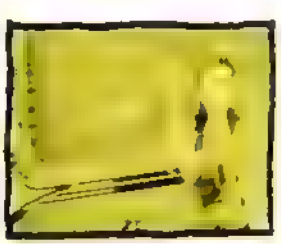
7 Atari's children: The Lynx game system is portable VR. 8 No hippy chick: Cyberperson bounces mystical orb inside Mandalaworld.



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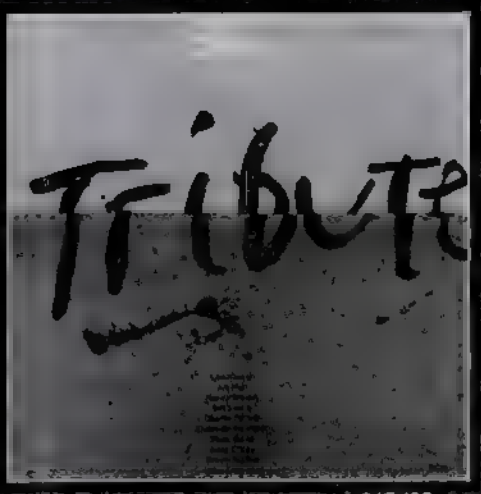
Keith Jarrett
Gary Peacock
Jack DeJohnette

Tribute



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With **I Took Up The Runes**, Jan Garbarek enters his third decade of recording for ECM. Featured on this brilliant new release is the outstanding drumming of Manu Katché.

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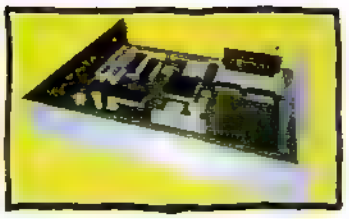

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it: My optimism is a casting of magic spells. . . . Everything you say affects the future, particularly at certain critical junctures—so it's an ethical responsibility to be proactively optimistic when you have an opportunity to be. And I believe that the people working in this field right now do have such an opportunity, so we have to take it."

Or as John Perry Barlow puts it: "Technology rides on skids greased by bullshit." But as Lanier's talk ended what hung in the air felt more like magic than it smelled like crap. Something had happened. Connections were starting to click.

On the way out, a wiry, thirtyish guy who'd noticed me taking notes struck up a conversation. Turned out he was a journalist, too, sort of: then managing editor of *Gnosis*, a new age magazine devoted to Western traditions of spiritual quest—gnosticism, paganism, Rosicrucianism, the occult, that type of thing. He has a classic seeker's profile: He'd recently quit a $65,000-a-year job as a lawyer to take the magazine gig and a 75 percent pay cut. He came to Cyberthon because he believes that maybe VR technology will help us figure out the process through which we are all continuously creating reality together. He believes that this process made possible the active production of what some people might call miracles, and that on more than one occasion his own intense meditation has provoked rain to fall from sunny skies. He lives in a small Silicon Valley town with his wife, a registered Republican who was running for the city council.

In the middle of our talk, a long-haired, black-clad twentysomethinger joined us and began to rant at Lanier's sometimes Pollyanna attitude: The government and the military already have their fingers in the technology—it is inevitable that they'll figure out nasty things to do with it, and imperative that we start imagining those things. We have to explore their mythic dimensions, their horror, and magnetize the technology with that mythos. "Anyway, I'm making a film about all this," he said, and handed us his card. The seeker and the filmmaker agreed that it would be a terrific idea to step outside and smoke a joint.

With justifiable fears of backlash hanging in the air, a taboo on all talk of "electronic LSD" has been in effect for some time among VR developers.

BY 1:00 IN THE MORNING, WAVY GRAVY could be found onstage regaling a packed audience with tales of Coyote, the Native-American trickster-hero. Coyote, it seems, spent a lot of his time shaking a magic rattle that made his penis grow as big or as small as he wanted it. If you didn't know any better, you might have thought Wavy was giving an allegorical presentation on the subject of virtual sex (also known as teledildonics, and believed by many to be the most likely spearhead for penetration of the home market by VR machines), in which nonsurgical alteration of the relevant body parts would undoubtedly play a central role.

But, in fact, Wavy Gravy was just a warm-up act, prepping the audience for Cyberthon's climactic moment: Together, on one stage, the high gurus of the emergent neocounterculture—Timothy Leary, John Perry Barlow, and philosopher-pharmacologist Terence McKenna (Leary's heir among the post-Castaneda crowd of serious psychedelicists)—were going to jam.

Barlow, as the most affable of the three (imagine a high-plains Jimmy Buffett with brains), took on the role of master of ceremonies, joking around and stroking the audience. "What a wonderful gathering," he said with heartfelt schmaltz. "*This* is a *community*!" I got a little bitty lump in my throat. The community responded with self-congratulatory whoops and applause.

Leary, a shrinking old man now, took the mike. "We've done this before," he croaked meaningfully. "Haven't we, Debbie?" he added, nodding down at Deborah Harlow, Jaron Lanier's fiancée and formerly a leading activist in the movement to legalize MDMA. Admittedly reeling from a recent blast of hashish, Leary was just coherent enough to invoke a totemic list of guiding spirits for the newborn community: Hermann Hesse, William Gibson, William S. Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon. Oh yeah, and Plato—"because when you start fucking around with realities, who thought it all up?" And also, of course, "Our partners in this incredible adventure to empower the individual human being with this wonderful technology—our friends from the island of Japan."

This went on for a while. Finally Leary passed the baton to Terence McKenna. Looking like an elfin rabbinical student and sounding like the result of a biotech experiment involving the genes of Jello Biafra and Paul Lynde, McKenna traced a mesmerizingly elaborate path through highbrow linguistic theory and Amazonian Indian rituals to paraphrase the obvious: that virtual reality is interesting for many of the same reasons hallucinogenic drugs are. Most people in the room no doubt took this for granted, but as the first speaker at the 'thon to make the connection, McKenna was treading dangerous ground. With justifiable fears of backlash hanging in the air, a taboo on all talk of "electronic LSD" has been growing for some time among VR developers. Sure enough, at the end of McKenna's talk, Debbie Harlow rose with a concrete warning: She and Jaron had recently received a newsletter put out by the criminal justice department of the state of Hawaii that quoted McKenna and *Mondo 2000* on virtual reality and alerted judges to the possible dangers of this new "drug."

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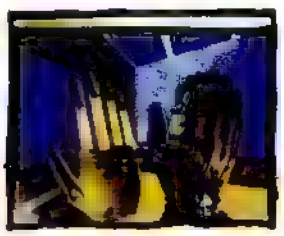

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9 'A bunch of technoweenies". *from left,* Jaron Lanier, Lawrence Wilkinson, Stewart Brand, and William Gibson discuss the social implications of VR. 10 Little Tijuana: Bean dip, nachos, and psychoactive soft drinks. 11 More cyber-face painting. 12 Goggles and glove, the Model T of virtual-reality systems.

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ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Americans At Their Best.

A1SPTW**041NP

Recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Byrds are perhaps

A fish-eye view of the Byrds circa 1965, *left to right:* David Crosby, Chris Hillman, Roger McGuinn, Michael Clarke, and Gene Clark.

COURTESY OF COLUMBIA RECORDS

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the most copied band ever. DAVE DiMARTINO traces the group's awesome legacy.

Byrd watching

The Byrds.

The most influential band in history? The best dressed? The coolest? The act recently anthologized on the CD boxed set you must buy above all others? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. • The Byrds. Rockin' dudes beyond belief. The group whose long, tall, and beaconed shadow affected all rock as we know it—and then some. • The Byrds. Their names fly right off the printed page into your ears, mind, and heart. Jim McGuinn, Roger McGuinn. And the other guys: Gene Clark, David Crosby, Chris Hillman, and Michael Clarke. The coolest American haircut band ever. • For kicks, let's say the Byrds were brutally killed before they ever made their first record.▸

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WITHOUT THE BYRDS

In the '60s

1) Bob Dylan, lacking the inspiration to go electric that the Byrds' cover of his "Mr. Tambourine Man" provided, would be hawking his folk-tainted wares on Rounder Records.

2) The Beatles, lacking the guitar-riff inspiration for "If I Needed Someone" that "The Bells of Rhymney" provided, would have shuffled about aimlessly, disbanding in late 1966.

3) Chuck Berry, lacking the reassurance that hip white-bread rock bands like the Byrds were out there covering "Roll Over Beethoven," between 1965 and 1968 would instead have been scoring bad B movies.

4) The Rolling Stones, lacking the example of Michael Clarke, would have elevated Brian Jones to the position of group leader merely because he had the coolest hair in the band—becoming a tired, aging, Brit blues band in the process.

5) Crosby, Stills and Nash, lacking Crosby, would have been merely Stills and Nash—and, as such, cause radio DJs to confuse them with Brewer and Shipley, Seals and Crofts, and Zager and Evans.

6) Pre–"Radar Love" Golden Earring, lacking the classic "Eight Miles High" track to devote an entire album side to, would have floundered instead of becoming the world-class superstars they remain today.

In the '70s

1) The Flying Burrito Brothers, lacking founding members Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons, would never have existed. Nor would have Dillard and Clark (no Gene Clark), Firefall (no Mike Clarke), or the Souther-Hillman-Furay Band (no Hillman). For that matter, kill off Poco, the Eagles, Rick Nelson and the Stone Canyon Band, Asylum Records, and all country rock in general while you're at it.

2) Hip U.K. pub rockers Starry-Eyed and Laughing, lacking the inspiration for not only their name but their entire sound—the Byrds version of Dylan's "Chimes of Freedom"—would not have existed, nor would the first two, highly Byrds/CSN&Y–influenced albums by Brinsley Schwarz.

3) Patti Smith, lacking a version of "So You Want to Be a Rock'n'Roll Star" to mangle on her preretirement album, *Wave*, would have instead covered Moby Grape's "Omaha," scored a massive hit with it, and you'd now be reading about the Skip Spence boxed set.

4) The Flamin' Groovies, lacking their entire post-'60s raison d'être, would have wisely folded up and remained legendary after *Teenage Head*.

5) Tom Petty, lacking the inspiration to write "American Girl" for his first album, would not have done so—and thus would have deprived Roger McGuinn, were he even to exist, of the opportunity to cover that same song on his *Thunderbyrd* album.

6) With such important forerunners as Brinsley Schwarz, the Flamin' Groovies, and Tom Petty out of the way, the bothersome punk and new wave rock genres would never have existed.

In the '80s

1) R.E.M., lacking their major source of inspiration, would instead have been ostracized by their peers for so blatantly ripping off the Beau Brummels' *Triangle* and *Bradley's Barn* albums.

2) Ditto the Soft Boys, the Television Personalities, the Church, Orange Juice ("I wore my fringe like Roger McGuinn's" sang Edwyn Collins on "Consolation Prize"), early My Bloody Valentine, the Stone Roses, and just about every interesting new band to have emerged from the U.K. in the past ten years. Excluding Momus, of course, who is a legendary figure unto himself and not really relevant in this discussion.

In Short

You could safely say that every band now playing rock'n'roll draws its inspiration from two major sources: the Byrds and the Velvet Underground. And since the only Velvet Underground boxed set I've got is a bootleg, we'll skip 'em.

POPULAR THEORIES ABOUT THE BYRDS

1) They were only good while Gene Clark was in the band (through *Turn! Turn! Turn!*, 1965).

2) They were only good before David Crosby left (through *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, 1968).

3) Their last good album was the one with Gram Parsons (*Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, 1968).

4) The only good thing about the Byrds after that was the fact that Clarence White played guitar for them (*Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde* through *Farther Along*, 1969–71).

5) The Byrds "reunion" album on *Asylum* (1973) sucked royally.

6) Roger McGuinn kept putting out solo records on Columbia that got less and less interesting (Roger McGuinn through *Thunderbyrd*, 1973–77).

7) McGuinn, Hillman, and (sometimes) Clark put out three albums on Capitol (1979–80) that were travesties of the Byrds' original glory.

8) David Crosby almost cut his hair (*Déjà Vu*, Atlantic, 1970) and got messed up bad.

9) Gene Clark released many solo albums that were great, and, occasionally, less great.

10) Chris Hillman learned how to sing and became a country star with the Desert Rose Band.

11) Michael Clarke joined the Burrito Brothers and Firefall, and—best of all—now tours the country performing as "The Byrds."

The Byrds make peace as the world makes war: reunion at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction.

WORDS FROM THE BYRDS

Now I'm talking to David Crosby, a few weeks before he and the four other original Byrds are slated to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And I'm asking him which lineup of the Byrds he thought was the best—the original five guys?

"Yeah, sure," he says. "You know, it's a very tough call on that one. It goes all the way from the original five guys, which I think was wonderful, through a couple of incarnations. The four guys without Gene were quite good—and the one after me that involved Gram Parsons and Clarence White, I think that was quite good, too."

"Did it bug you that they were still using the Byrds name?"

"I thought it was still pretty valid," says Crosby. "Roger was the main thing in the Byrds, and everybody knows that. I'm a great supporter of that. He was still pretty true to the Byrds' musical integrity up through that point. But when it got to be people like Skip Battin [bassist who joined in late 1969]," he says, pausing, "I think it went downhill very sadly at that point."

Crosby, mind you, has been known to be "colorful" about the post-Crosby Byrds in the past. But he's not now. I ask him why.

"Well, when I was trying to break away from the band, it was like a kid leaving a family, you know? You argue a lot with your parents, and then stomp out the door. But then, later on, you realize you love 'em and you go back. When we parted company—actually they tossed me out, oh my—I thought they were terrible villains. But the truth is they're wonderful guys, and they're among my closest friends now."

DANNY CLINCH

Okay, now let's hit up Chris Hillman: "What happened in '68 when you left the Byrds for the Flying Burrito Brothers, Chris? Any bad feelings between you and Roger?"

"Probably initially at the time," says Hillman. "I think Roger and I have always had a pretty close relationship, so maybe I was upset for one day. But I think Roger understood, and he felt the same way. He needed the stimuli as well as I did. And I just felt frustrated at that point—and what I really wanted to do, we sort of touched on in the Byrds' *Sweetheart of the 'Rodeo* album. I wanted to take it a step further, and Gram Parsons was the natural guy to do that with."

"And what do you think of the old Byrds records?"

"I'm proud of that body of work. I'd say seventy to eighty percent of what we recorded stands up today. 'Tambourine Man' and 'Turn! Turn! Turn!' are such beautiful songs lyrically—they have substance, they have depth to them. They can go for another thirty years. That's what I'm proud of. And I was a lucky guy to be part of that. Those guys were good."

Every band now playing rock'n'roll draws its inspiration from two sources: the Byrds and the Velvet Underground.

So you get the idea? A lot of water under the bridge. Successful solo careers. Induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. A new Arista album for Roger McGuinn featuring Crosby and Hillman doing backing vocals. A Columbia 4-CD boxed retrospective of Byrds material featuring McGuinn, Crosby, and Hillman doing four new songs. Careers on the upturn. New promotional possibilities. Let's get together and record again real soon. Et cetera.

Except for the unpleasantness.

The matter of Michael Clarke, touring with a pickup band as the Byrds; the matter of Gene Clark.

"The other guys got hungry sitting around out there," says David Crosby. "First Gene went around with a very, very bad band, calling it the Byrds. Well, okay. Gene was one of the original writer/singer guys—and I thought that, though the band was awful, he had as much right to claim the essential part of the Byrds as anybody else.

"But when it gets to be Michael Clarke the drummer—who never wrote anything or sang anything—going out there with an even worse band, and claiming to be the Byrds, at times even advertising themselves as the 'original' Byrds, and they can't play the stuff. . . . What they were was a bunch of drunks out there desperately trying to make enough money to get to the next bus stop. It was dragging the name in the dirt.

"At first I tried to ask him to stop doing that, and

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then I tried to stop him from doing it—and I couldn't really. Because he was an original guy, and I couldn't legally prevent him from doing that. But it was gross. And I'm sorry for the guy, but I guarantee you—if we get back together, he won't be in the band."

Now I'm talking to Gene Clark, who's enjoying his own career renaissance. Aside from being featured on ten tracks on the Byrds boxed set—he doesn't know which ten, he says, just that there's ten—Clark's many solo albums are continuously being reissued on CD. The most recent, 1966's *Gene Clark With the Gosdin Brothers*, his first ever solo set, just reemerged from CBS; it's in the racks with *Two Sides to Every Story*, *No Other*, and his pair with Dillard and Clark. He is in demand in Europe. A cult figure. Plans to go there this summer. Plans to record two new albums: a solo one and another with former Textone Carla Olson.

Two sides to every story. Clark is anticipating his future.

"I went out touring as a 'Tribute to the Byrds' is what it was," he says, explaining. "I actually never really played as the Byrds. I mean, some of the promoters would bill it as the Byrds but I always resented people doing it."

Clark says it doesn't bother him that he wasn't asked to participate in the song selection for the Byrds boxed set. Some feel Clark's early, classic material—such as "You Won't Have to Cry" and "Here Without You"—was unjustly bypassed in favor of less-than-stellar Dylan covers like "The Times They Are a-Changin'."

"I understand what they did," says Clark. "There's still a little bit of healing to be done between me and McGuinn and some of the other guys."

"Especially McGuinn?"

"Yeah, it's the crux of the problem, really," he says. "There are resentments that go back. By now I think they're kind of silly. I think that they should just be forgotten, and that we should move on and just be friends. Especially now."

Especially now. Scant days before the Byrds' induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Clark is enthusing about the upcoming ceremony, and what it might bring. "This Hall of Fame thing is a very opportune time for us all to be together in a glorious situation, if you dig what I'm saying," he says. "And it makes things quite different, because we're able to be somewhere where everybody feels good about themselves, rather than having it be a standoffish kind of thing. And I'm hoping that everybody will be very cordial."

Clark adds that he'd just gotten a call from Michael Clarke. "He said, 'Man, this is a good time for us to really get a chance to talk to everybody.' And it's true. Everybody can talk to each other and resolve all our differences and all that stuff."

"Do you speak with Michael often?"

"Michael and I talk quite a bit," he says. "And I was talking with Crosby quite a bit, but I haven't talked to him recently. And then I did talk to Chris. But I haven't spoken to Roger. He's the only one I haven't spoken to. But I will."

Byrd droppings, *clockwise from top left*: the Stone Roses, the Beatles, Tom Petty, R.E.M.

McGUINN

I've run into Roger McGuinn several times in my life:

1) At a small college bar in East Lansing, Michigan, in 1974, where he was playing a solo set to a handful of people. I interviewed him. He showed me the first cellular phone I'd ever seen. It was in a briefcase.

2) In a conference room at a large, well-known music trade magazine in 1987. McGuinn told me he had recently been the opening act for such groups as Steppenwolf, Three Dog Night, and Alvin Lee. He was there promoting *Never Before*, a now-deleted album of unreleased Byrds tracks. "It's a nice package," he told me at the time. "I think it's real pretty. I don't get anything *out* of it, but I've been promoting it like crazy."

Why didn't he get any royalties for it? Because of the five solo albums he'd recorded for CBS, he said. "My management at the time made the wonderful decision to cross-collateralize my royalties from the Byrds into the CBS solo albums," he said, wearily. "The solo albums never made a penny, and they went into the red to the point where I haven't seen any Byrds royalties for a few years now."

3) At a small-but-swanky Santa Monica restaurant last year, McGuinn—who'd just been signed to Arista—shook hands with the press and retailers. Then he pulled out his guitar, and—just as he'd been doing for years upon years upon years—played "Mr. Tambourine Man" one more time.

I mention all this because of the ultimate irony: McGuinn, who with Chris Hillman penned "So You Want to Be a Rock'n'Roll Star" in 1966, has had his ups and downs. He has been accused of milking the Byrds' name for too long ("I really thought that it was more or less like keeping a brand name together for the sake of having a brand name," he told me). He has played in stadiums around the world. He has played in college bars with no accompaniment but his own guitar.

Now he's playing for executives at Arista Records (the label run by his former boss at CBS Records, Clive Davis). He's making videos. He's recording with Tom Petty and Elvis Costello—and David Crosby and Chris Hillman. "We got together a couple of years ago," says McGuinn. "We've been getting along fine lately."

In short, Roger McGuinn is a contender again.

Is he excited by it all? If he makes the charts, will girls tear him apart? Does it even *matter* to him?

"I've always been happy about what I was doing," says McGuinn, soft-spoken, polite, and strangely emotionless. "Doing solo gigs without a record contract was really rewarding," he says. "I almost got to the point of saying who *needs* to record again. But this thing fell in my lap—so okay, I'll go along with it.

"But I really enjoyed not having to deal with that whole mechanism," he adds, saying the same thing he's been saying since 1974. "I just loved going out and touring. And audiences were so responsive—we just had such a good time all the time."

Now and then, Roger McGuinn is one strange cookie.

SHOWTIME

On January 16, the U.S. and allied forces began their series of air strikes against Iraq.

On the same day the five original Byrds, at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Lined up onstage, Crosby, Hillman, and McGuinn stood alongside Gene Clark and Michael Clarke. McGuinn extended his arm and pulled Clark toward him. Clark pulled Clarke along. Bombs fell on Baghdad. The Byrds played "Turn! Turn! Turn!" "Mr. Tambourine Man," and "Feel a Whole Lot Better."

Earlier that week, I'd asked Gene Clark if he thought anything might happen if all five of the original band members sat at a table and talked their hearts out.

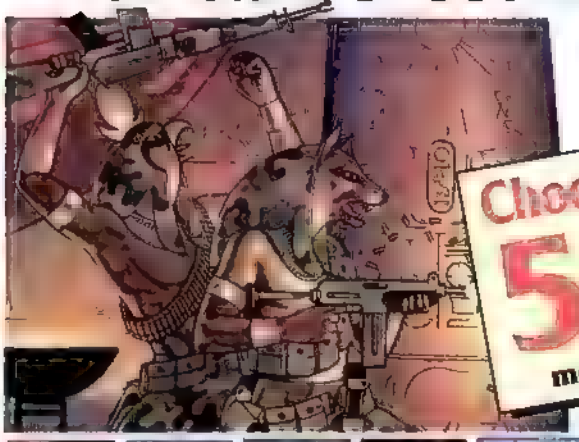
"I think something would come of it," he'd said. "Yes, I do. I really do."

Right.

A war started.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: AARON RAPOPORT; ANTON CORBIJN; COURTESY OF SIL VERSTONE RECORDS

"Give it up, Joe. You can't shoot holes in their offer."



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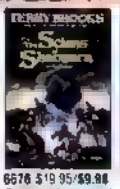

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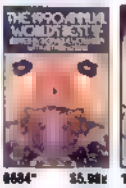

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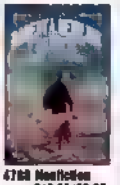

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AIDS

WORDS FROM THE FRONT

In 1988 we introduced you to Michael Callen, the maverick AIDS activist who had survived AIDS for six years. It's now three years later and, believe it or not, he's still with us—alive and well and living in L.A. Does this mean that AIDS is survivable? CELIA FARBER reports.

There isn't any rational language for me to describe how I feel. All the imagery is religious or spiritual. I feel blessed, I feel lucky. I can't believe *I'm still here.*

—Michael Callen

I'M A FEW MINUTES LATE FOR OUR MEETING. I turn the corner and there he is—perched on a step, squinting in the sun, as alive as anyone. In fact, more so.

He has survived AIDS, full-blown AIDS that is, for nine years if you go by the date of his official diagnosis, *ten* if you start counting from when he first got sick. Michael Callen: 36 years old. Self-taught expert on every aspect of AIDS. On how to increase your chances of survival. How to stay sane through it all. How to have sex. How to have hope.

You've met him before, in this column and elsewhere. He is ubiquitous—one of the most widely quoted people in the AIDS arena. I myself must have interviewed him a few dozen times. And every time I call him, my heart pounds until either he or his machine picks up and reassures me that he is in fact, by some miracle of God, still there.

When I see him, I feel better. He does not *seem* sick. He is thin but by no means emaciated. He has a few small lesions, mostly in places that are concealed by his clothing. He has a tan because of a drug he takes daily. He has more energy than you or I. And his mind is like a steel trap. For a reporter, he is a walking AIDS data bank—a human piñata, filled with history. Ask him anything. But his favorite topic is still sex. When we're finished talking about AIDS, he never forgets to inquire about my love life.

Today, over the phone, he told me this:

"I have this really weird image whenever I get really sick. Like recently, twice, I lost my eyesight very suddenly for reasons nobody knows. And in those moments I feel like AIDS is slapping me in the face and saying, 'I'm still here. Don't forget me.' I hear this stewardess in my mind say, 'We are beginning our descent. Please fasten your seat belts.' I've been with people when they've taken that fateful turn for the worse and everybody knew that's what it was. But I'm really lucky to have known so many long-term survivors. The stewardess will say, 'We've begun our descent,' and the survivors will say, 'Fuck you! Don't count me out until I'm out.' And then they'll pull through one more time."

MICHAEL, LIKE ANY PWA, FACES HIS MORtality every single day, perhaps every waking hour, and the experience has made him stronger—better. He is closer to death and therefore closer to life. "AIDS has taught me the preciousness of life and the healing power of love," says Callen, who used to be, he says, "very, very cynical."

But AIDS is also, Callen has said, "... a roller coaster ride without a seat belt ... like motion sickness except you realize that you'll never stop moving; one way or another, you'll be dealing with AIDS for the rest of your life. It's like standing in the middle of the New York Stock Exchange at midday—buzzers and lights flashing, everyone yelling, a million opinions, a momentum. ... AIDS is about loss of control—control of one's bowels and bladder, one's arms or legs, one's life. Sometimes the loss is sudden; sometimes torturously gradual. It's about the *anticipation* of pain as well as actual pain itself. It's about swelling and horrible disfigurement. It is horror."

He is slender, green-eyed, poised, and sarcastic. If he were an animal he'd be a blue point Siamese cat. When asked by reporters how he can still be alive, he's been known to quip, "Luck, Classic Coke, and the love of a good man." His mother says he's still alive because he's got American Indian blood in him, and because he's "too mean to die."

Like all great people, he is both loved and despised, adulated and persecuted. By all estimates, he is a hero.

His battle cry has been heard and heeded all over the world: "Not everybody dies of AIDS. There are survivors." Not many, mind you. Of the 1,049 Americans diagnosed with AIDS during 1982, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) could not confirm that *any* were still alive. However, the CDC has not kept track of patients diagnosed that long ago. But whether there is a PWA out there who has outlived Callen is hardly the point—because he's so much more than just a long-term survivor. Since his official diagnosis

DANNY CLINCH

Living is the best revenge: Michael Callen, ten years after his AIDS diagnosis. *Above*, cover art for Callen's album.

Like all great people, Callen is both loved and despised, adulated and persecuted. By all estimates, he is a hero.

nine years ago with what was then called GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency), Callen has always been a central protagonist in the AIDS wars—starting up AIDS organizations (the PWA Health Group, the Community Research Initiative), writing and editing countless journals and articles, speaking on national TV, to the press, poring over scientific data, bickering with scientists, activists and politicians, singing, marching, and perhaps most importantly, traveling the world in search of other long-term survivors. He recently compiled his findings in a book titled *Surviving AIDS* (HarperCollins, 1990).

His findings are diverse and complex. There is no simple formula for surviving AIDS, but there are a few basic traits that virtually all of the long-term survivors share. "All of the long-term survivors I interviewed believe in the possibility of their own survival," says Callen. "They refuse to buy into the media's unrelenting message of doom and gloom, of AIDS as an "invariably fatal disease. For most people, AIDS is all about dying, but for some people, it's a challenge to start living."

Callen is careful to stress that this isn't some EST seminar. "I'm not saying that all you have to do to survive AIDS is have the right attitude. But I have found time and time again that those who give up—who say to themselves, 'Death from AIDS is inevitable, so why fight?'—they seem to go very quickly. Whereas the fighters—who say, 'Goddamn it, I'm not gonna let AIDS control my life!'—they hang around a lot longer.

"I get desperate phone calls all the time," he says. "On my book tour, people would come up to me and touch my sleeve, like I was magic or something. They'd say, 'I'm not taking AZT because you're not.' But I'd tell them, 'That's no reason. Do your homework, study the data and decide what's right for you.'

"I'm not an expert," Callen stresses. "I've seen people refer to me as *Doctor* Michael Callen, which is rather startling. I've never said, like certain leaders in the community, 'Well, I've looked at the data and this is what you should do.' I say, 'Gee. Here's the problem. People are dying of X, Y, and Z. I've gone to the library, I've talked to doctors, now let me talk to other PWAs and interview them. People who are doing holistic medicine, or who think that antibiotics cause AIDS, or whatever. Then I've dumped that mass of confusion into my newsletters and my speeches."

Indeed, Callen has strong biases, or beliefs, about AIDS—about what causes it and how to treat it. But when presented with information that conflicts with those biases, he listens. He is perhaps the only AIDS activist I have ever spoken to who has confessed to having been wrong about anything. Or, for that matter, confused.

He does not yell and scream and throw things and march about with signs declaring people to be murderers. That is not to say that he hasn't felt the same rage. Or that he is a smiley face with his pockets full of crystals. It's just not his style. It's too simplistic and AIDS, as Callen knows better than anybody, is too complex. If you could put "On the other hand . . . " on the back of a sign, Callen might join the march. "I've made it my mission to share confusion," he says, "because that's all we have."

In recent years, AIDS has boomed into so much more than a disease—it is a disease with a philosophy. Self-empowerment, pride, and a defiance of traditional medical expertise are the building blocks of today's AIDS movement, and Callen, being one of the movement's founding fathers, reflects with mixed emotions.

"History is going to have to judge whether the PWA self-empowerment movement, which I had a hand in, was a good thing or a bad thing ultimately," he says. "Clearly the idea that people with AIDS take responsibility and participate in their treatment is a fine idea, but there have been a number of permutations of which I am not too proud. There is a tendency for some people with AIDS to bludgeon people with their disease. People lose sight of the fact that having AIDS does not

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make you a good person, automatically. It doesn't make you holy. If you were a shit before, chances are you're going to be a shit as a PWA.

"The thing that worries me the most about the current AIDS activist movement is the sort of rabid anti-expertism that I think has gotten totally out of hand. Their rallying cry is 'Drugs Into Bodies,' which to them means any drug into any body. It's this extreme libertarian version of self-empowerment. The activists are well-intentioned, but they simply do not possess adequate training to be making some of the pronouncements that they're making."

Michael heaves a deep sigh, grins, and asks, "Was that gentle?"

Callen took his own money and published what became the first safe sex manifesto. The points put forth in that booklet have since become the nucleus of safe sex education programs throughout the world.

ALL BUT ONE OF the long-term survivors Callen interviewed had stayed away from toxic, immune-suppressive AIDS drugs such as AZT. Many of them had dabbled in all sorts of alternative treatments, often in combination with conventional, relatively safe drugs. Callen himself says, "You couldn't pay me to take AZT, but I am a firm believer in prophylaxis—preventive medication—for AIDS. Prophylaxis for PCP [Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia] is the only drug treatment that I've been willing to be messianic about." Callen has crossed the world, reaching as far as Australia and covering some 180,000 air miles, to spread this particular message. "PCP is still the leading cause of death," he says, "and most people still don't know that it is preventable."

Seated next to him in the cafe we have come to to talk is the man Michael Callen says he owes his life to, his doctor and close friend Joseph Sonnabend. "If it were not for Joe," Callen says, "I would be dead." Between them, the two have pioneered more critical and controversial AIDS theories, ideas, and practices—from safe sex to the prevention of PCP—than a dozen AIDS organizations combined. Working in tandem for a near decade—Sonnabend spinning forth his complex yet logical theories about what AIDS is and how to treat it and Callen popularizing his ideas to the public through writing, lecturing, and speaking to the press—they have created an AIDS model that may be closer to the truth than anything else out there. It is known as the "multifactorial model" and is firmly rooted in common sense and traditional medicine. Simply put, Sonnabend's AIDS model suggests that AIDS is not the result of a single virus, HIV, but of several elements that team up and finally cause the collapse of the immune system. If the cause is multifaceted, it follows that the treatment is, too.

"People don't die of AIDS," Sonnabend says flatly, and for the ten-thousandth time. "Mostly they die of diseases that are preventable and that have been preventable for decades. If you prevent those diseases they'll stay alive." Sonnabend tries to avoid prescribing the highly toxic AIDS drug AZT, calling it simply "incompatible with life." Rather than put all the effort into zapping HIV, which may or may not be a critical factor in AIDS, Sonnabend has devised a multipronged approach that creates a kind of medicinal safety net. In Callen's case this means taking between 35 and 50 pills a day. In addition to his treatments with aerosolized pentamadine, the drug used to prevent PCP, he is on preventive medications for MAI (a kind of tuberculosis), herpes, and is taking antifungal and antiparasitic medications. It's not as simple as it may sound, however—AIDS is full of surprises and often patients die of diseases for which there simply is no treatment.

Because of the federal AIDS-research machinery's total fixation on HIV as the cause of AIDS, Sonnabend's AIDS model has been largely ignored, if not flat out attacked. Callen sheds some light on this: "We live in a media age that loves sound bites and simple quotes. HIV is simple, whereas the multifactorial model is very complex. People don't want to take the time to understand it."

Some critics of the of the Callen-Sonnabend approach to AIDS, have been particularly fierce; Martin Delaney, leader of the San Francisco AIDS group Project Inform, went so far as to state that the two are "complicit in the deaths of any AIDS patient who did not take AZT." Callen retorted, "I am willing to accept the enormous responsibility for those patients if you will accept responsibility for those who died who *did* take AZT."

Callen and Dr. Joseph Sonnabend.

Sonnabend invited Delaney, or anybody else interested, to go through his patient files and examine the last 100 deaths—when they were diagnosed, how long they survived, and what they finally died of—if a pro-AZT doctor would do the same. Nobody took him up on his challenge, and so the accusation lingers unresolved, causing great pain to both men who, despite their uncompromising mission to save lives, have wound up accused of murder.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIbutions Callen and Sonnabend have made to AIDS is also one of the most simple—at least it seems simple now: safe sex. It's all the rage these days, but when they first proposed it in 1982, they were damn near crucified.

A self-described "truth junkie," Michael Callen was never one to stare somberly at the floor and tell journalists that he had no idea how he got AIDS. Instead he would flash his bright green eyes and say quite matter-of-factly: "By the time I was diagnosed with AIDS, I calculated that I had had at least 3,000 people up my ass." He would then go on to list the array of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) he had acquired—hepatitis A, B, non-A, non-B; herpes simplex I and II; syphilis; gonorrhea; Epstein-Barr virus; cytomegalovirus; salmonella; cryptosporidiosis; et cetera. "The question in my mind," says Callen, "was not why I had AIDS but how I had been able to remain standing on two feet for so long."

When Callen walked into Sonnabend's office in 1982, Sonnabend told him in no uncertain terms that if he didn't stop having so much sex he would die. Sonnabend, jarred by the appearance of a new fatal disease among gay men in New York City, had begun to investigate the cause. A CDC study had questioned the first 100 men diagnosed and concluded that their median number of lifetime sexual partners was, approximately, a startling 1,120. Based on this report, and his own observations of his largely gay, male practice, Sonnabend began to formulate his multifactorial model for AIDS. He theorized that repeated infections with sexually transmitted diseases and other immune-suppressive factors ultimately leads to the immune collapse known as AIDS. In the early days of AIDS, before the discovery of HIV, researchers were fumbling in the dark with the new, mysterious disease. This was largely due to a sociological problem: They had no clue about what was then the life-style of many gays —unimaginable amounts of sex combined with recreational drugs. As Callen writes in his book: "For me being gay *meant* having lots of sex . . . One strain of gay-liberationist rhetoric proclaimed that sex was inherently liberating; by a curiously naive calculus, it seemed to follow that more sex was *more* liberating."

"Unwittingly," Callen concludes, "and with the best of revolutionary intentions, a small subset of gay men managed to create disease settings equivalent to those of poor third world countries in one of the richest nations on earth."

Callen, Sonnabend, and another of Sonnabend's patients, Richard Berkowitz, put their heads together and decided there was a politically safe thing to do and an ethically correct thing to do. They chose the latter, and in 1982 Callen and Berkowitz wrote one of the most explosive and controversial articles ever published in the gay press. At a time when the gay sexual-liberation movement was still in full swing—when gay author Edmund White was declaring that "gay men should wear their sexually transmitted diseases

continued on page 107

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Platter du Jour

EDITED BY JIM GREER

DINOSAUR JR.

Green Mind

Sire/Reprise/blanco y negro

Dinosaur Jr.'s second album, 1987's *You're Living All Over Me*, was the event of the year—maybe even of the late 1980s—in the American guitar-rock underground. Hüsker Dü fans found what they were looking for in the record, but it owes as much to Black Sabbath and the Grateful Dead as anything current. When I saw the band performing live just before the record was released, front man J. Mascis seemed to be in a dream state, letting his hand fall down to his guitar in slow motion, stepping gingerly on a distortion pedal—then another, then one more—and singing through the hair in his face (I don't know or care what about.) His guitar cried, screamed, and exploded; I felt the ache of the melodies in my bones for hours after the show.

Tighter songs made for a slightly less thrilling follow-up, *Bug*. Talented bassist and occasional songwriter Lou Barlow—who played the role of a Bob Stinson figure in Dinosaur Jr., not through substance abuse but by injecting an extra jolt of chaos into the band's gestalt—wastes five minutes of side two screaming, "Why don't you like me?" I guess it was a good question, since Mascis kicked him out of the band not long after the album was released.

Green Mind lacks the drama of a band teetering between glory and disaster, but that spine-tingling feeling of vertigo can only be sustained so long. The pressures and benefits of major-label affiliation seem to have done Mascis good, with much of the musical and interpersonal tension gone, he sounds like a relaxed solo artist. *Green Mind* is a classy sellout move, complete with neat use of a woodwind effect on "Thumb," which suggests Mascis likes the idea of lots of people listening to his music. Anyone who shelled out the bucks for *The Layla Sessions* really might want to check out Mascis' guitar work. Trained as a drummer, he once told SPIN he finds the guitar to be a "weird and undynamic instrument." I like to think it's his impatience with the guitar that leads him to urge such amazing, heartbreaking music from it. He hasn't played a boring solo yet. Lest my Clapton allusion worry you, rest assured Mascis doesn't get bogged down in virtuosity on *Green Mind*, but keeps things moving along at a good pace. He even gets a little funky on two cuts.

"Here I am and there you stand" (not a prelude to intimacy but just the way it's going to be) pretty well sums up the primary mode of Mascis' songwriting. He writes mostly about the difficulties he has dealing with the world outside his bedroom—especially with women, who interest him but make him nervous. If you must ask this man for an autograph, please be very gentle and don't move suddenly. Brooding about "scary things across the water," he recalls the fear of being a skinny kid at camp, afraid to go in the sexy, muddy pond, without getting cute about it. He sings about frogs and insects because he feels he has a lot in common with the little critters. On *Bug* I began to wonder how many songs Mascis could build around the words *fester*, *scar*, and *gore*, but I've gotten used to his lyrical quirks by now—I'm even willing to accept *unfry* as a verb. Dinosaur Jr.'s songs are never going to provide insight into anything but Mascis' own mind—at least not as long as he hides in his room all day—but the band's oddball lyrical visions and sonic thrills continue to [illegible]

Ivan Kreilkamp

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Music for the Masses

BY BOB MACK

FOR MOST OF US, DANCE MUSIC IS a mystery shrouded in the throbbing beats, gyrating pelvises, and the smoky swirl of clubs. You hear a bitchin' groove, ask a wriggling cutie what it's called, get nowhere, ask the DJ, and he either yells something incomprehensible or ignores you

We at SPIN won't ignore you, but since this column was written in January, the songs mentioned below may be obsolete by the time you read it in April. Of course, you might get lucky. One of the best dance songs of last year, **Marathon**'s "**Movin'**," might finally be coming out on Epic this summer, a year after it broke. Even so, if the Epic flack who commented that "the masses still don't have a clue" was talking about you, read on and you might recognize a few songs that'll still be hot (or at least cool) in the spring.

The search for perfect beats has become megacompetitive (hundreds of plain-label singles are released each week), and the use of gimmicks to attract attention has increased accordingly. One of the dance hits you may have heard this winter in the clubs and on Hot 97 was "**Show Me How to Dance**" by the **Bingo Boys**, which featured goofy, Arthur Murray-type dance instructions grafted on to a pop-house track.

But it was an anonymous German producer recording a side project under the name **Enigma** who scored most conspicuously with the Dark Ages disco cut "**Sadeness**" (as in the Marquis de). The track starts with a standard call and response—but it's one of monks doing Gregorian chants. After the beats kick in, synth washes buoy the flute flourishes, while French spoken words and heavy female panting get the point across. This offbeat equation equaled No. 1 in 10 countries, made "Sadeness" the fastest selling single in German history and confused New York record store owners into thinking it featured Mongolian chants. Gregorian, Mongolian—

DAVID LEE ROTH

A Little Ain't Enough

Warner Bros.

Photos of minstrels are inside David Lee Roth's new CD booklet, kinda like his blackface warpaint on the cover of *Eat 'Em and Smile* (1986)—thus indicating he's back to his white Negro shoot-your-mouth-off shoot-'em-ups, so he can *be* rap without *going* rap. Not bad, either. On "It's Showtime!" my machine calls his machine, and we do lunch on the cutting-room floor atop a Sabbath "Children of the Grave" groove. And "Hammerhead Shark" bites a bigger one than any Moby-sized fish-of-prey dick metaphor since Heart's "Barracuda": eight to the bar, '50s and Bible references, reminds me of "Highway 61 Revisited" somehow.

what's the difference?

It didn't go to No. 1 in ten countries, but former Adamski partner **Seal**'s debut, "**Crazy**," leaped to No. 2 in the U.K., right behind "Sadeness." Unlike "Sadeness," no gimmicks here, just a real song and stirring vocal that's being compared to Marvin Gaye. Based on a '70s cop-show-type bass synth line, "Crazy" flows natch enough that you hum along on first listening. Hipsters blanched at the lush production by Trevor Horn for his ZTT label (which earlier put out 808 State and is now hyping Shades of Rhythm), and "Crazy" was remixed with less portentousness by **William Orbit**, who has released some great grooves of his own under the name **Bass-o-matic**.

Bass-o-matic's first single was "Fascinating Rhythm," which is what Orbit, who used to be a cheesy rocker named Billy, now specializes in. In particular, "**Zombie Mantra**" and "**Soul Surrender**," the B sides on the follow-up single, "**Ease on By (Remix)**," are remarkable for their incorporation of vocoder (!), harmonica, guitar shards, house piano snatches, honky brass, and jazzy flute into a more familiar weave of space sequencers and female wails. The A side, too, is unique for its vaguely reggae lope that slows down all the bleeps and puts them in a fresh context.

Of course there are lots of great "dance" or "house" cuts out nowadays—some gimmicky ("**It's the Plumber**" by **Aunt Josia**), some almost real songs ("**I Wanna Give You Devotion**" by **Nomad Featuring MC Mikee Freedom**) and some just grooves'n'piano (the Riddim Composers' "Baby Baby"). But nowadays for me is January, and besides, Mr. and Ms. Clueless Masses, you're probably still in the dark and itching for some classic rock'n'fuckin' roll anyway. Well, I promised we wouldn't ignore you, but space permits me to tell you only that the **Knack** is back, as are the **Butthole Surfers** (great cover of Donovan's "**Hurdy Gurdy Man**" in yellow seven-inch vinyl), and the first group I ever saw in concert, **Queen**, whose most recent single, "**Innuendo**," is their best since "Bohemian Rhapsody." Be sure to listen to the B side ("**Under Pressure**"). It won't teach you anything about dance music, but you'll finally understand Vanilla Ice.

THE A LIST

Marathon, "Movin' " (E.G., U K.)
Enigma, "Sadeness" (Charisma)
Seal, "Crazy" (ZTT/WEA)
Bass-o-matic, "Ease on By (Remix)" (Virgin)
Queen, "Innuendo" (EMI, import)

And "40 Below" is the Diamond One's most cold-blooded deep freeze since "Ice Cream Man," back when he was the Johnny Rotten of the real world—"whippin' in your window," that sort of thing.

But "The Dogtown Shuffle" is the real doozy. It's "Bang a Gong" meets Zep's "In the Evening" meets VH's "Mean Street" meets Scorsese's *Mean Streets* meets the last Warren Zevon (or Iggy, maybe) CD. "Some self-made guy gets it in the ass at the local mini-mall": That's cruel shit. Pseudo-sampled rude black dude on top, and this "there goes the neighborhood" coda. Funny how Ice Cube's got all these aging rock stars spooked.

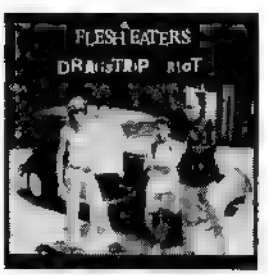
What else? Eric Clapton crap (a parody?), nitwit horns, Delta picking, sensible shoes (Dave said it, I didn't).

THE LEAVING TRAINS
SLEEPING UNDERWATER SURVIVORS

THE LEAVING TRAINS throw down such a "fuck you" sound on their new LP, you'll be sore with perverse pleasure. Head Train, Falling James, continues to wage a war upon what most people swallow whole on a daily basis, so wake up and suck up SLEEPING UNDERWATER SURVIVORS, produced by Earle Mankey. (SST 271 LP/CA/CD).

Also Available:
KILL TUNES
(SST 071 LP/CA/CD)
FUCK
(SST 114 LP/CA/CD)
TRANSPORTATIONAL D. VICES
(SST 221 LP/CA/CD)

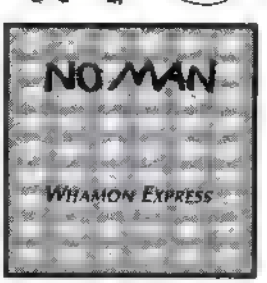
the FLESH EATERS
DRAGSTRIP RIOT



The pea and pipes of CHRIS D. have ripped up and torn down the many roads he's driven as leader of THE FLESH EATERS, DIVINE HORSEMEN and STONE BY STONE. Chris D. is back with a fresh Flesh Eaters line-up and a double LP of new cuts that spits fire and shoots it straight between your legs. (SST 273 2 XLP/XTD. CA/XTD. CD).

DESTROYED BY FIRE
(SST 094 LP/CA)
PREHISTORIC FITS
(SST 264 LP/CA/CD)

NO MAN
WHAMON EXPRESS



NO MAN is ROGER MILLER and his guitar rages in the MISSION OF BURMA vein as no other can. A sizzling cover of Bowie's "Man Who Sold The World" along with maximum strength Roger Miller songs such as "(I Live On) Heaven Street," "It's Not Enough" and "S.O.B." will wallop you. (SST 267 LP/CA/CD).

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THE TRAGICALLY HIP

ROAD APPLES

The New Album Features "Three Pistols,"

Anticipates The Band's Spring Tour

And Defies Description

On MCA Compact Discs, HiG Cassettes

And Records.

MCA.

Oh, and that "vaccinated with a phonograph needle" line in the one Robbie Nevil (!?) helped write—I've got that Aerosmith record, too. And "Baby's on Fire" is funkier than anything Billy Squier's done lately, but I was kinda hoping it was an Eno cover.

Chuck Eddy

EPMD

Business As Usual

Def Jam/RAL

Style. EPMD had it. The band's 1988 debut album, *Strictly Business*, was full of lethargic rapping over deep '70s funk grooves. But backed by the grooves, EPMD just sounded too cool to care. Lyrically speaking, the band was on the baddest-on-the-microphone tip and sloppy in its delivery, not helped by Erick Sermon's lisp. But it didn't matter. EPMD had style.

With the band's new LP, *Business As Usual*, EPMD is still sloppy in its delivery. It's still on the baddest-on-the-microphone tip. But the beats are harder, the delivery is harder, and the lyrics are harder. EPMD is moving toward the gangster tip with songs like "Rampage," "Manslaughter," and "I'm Mad." But what are they mad about? On "Give the People," EPMD complains that bands that are "too black, too strong" don't get Grammys, whereas sellout bands that rap about black presidents and freedom do. That may be true, but taboo rappers like N.W.A and 2 Live Crew sell to lots of bourgeois white kids.

So whatcha sayin', EPMD? That you're not gonna take no shit from nobody? Yeah, right.

EPMD had style.

J. K. Mingo

SCREAMING TREES

Uncle Anesthesia

Epic

Although the Trees dislike their music being referred to as psychedelic, their major label debut LP is very groovy in a way that hearkens back to all your fave psych-grunge bands from the early days. And that's a good thing. Singer Mark Lanegan's vocals conjure up images of early Iggy, while the Conner brothers—Gary Lee on guitar, and Van on

bass—weave some grungy Trogg-like string work, especially on the excellent "Ocean of Confusion." The Trees have toured endlessly in the six years they've been together, and while that seems to have helped tighten their sound, it's taken its toll on their personnel lineup. The latest casualty is the exit of maestro-drummer Mark Pickerel.

Oh yeah, the Screaming Trees are

Little Sutty's Quest for Music *by Mark Blackwell*

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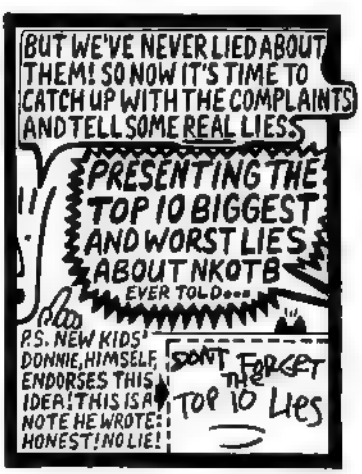
NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK CARTOON
HI. HERE AT SPIN WE GET TONS OF LETTERS AND CALLS ABOUT THE MANY "LIES" WE "SPREAD" ABOUT NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK.


BUT WE'VE NEVER LIED ABOUT THEM! SO NOW IT'S TIME TO CATCH UP WITH THE COMPLAINTS AND TELL SOME REAL LIES.
PRESENTING THE TOP 10 BIGGEST AND WORST LIES ABOUT NKOTB EVER TOLD...
P.S. NEW KIDS' DONNIE, HIMSELF, ENDORSES THIS IDEA! THIS IS A NOTE HE WROTE: HONEST! NO LIE!
DON'T FORGET THE TOP 10 Lies

from Seattle, but in this case, that just happens to be their hometown—not their musical influence.

Lauren Spencer

HAPPY FAMILY

Lucky

50, . . . 000 Watts

Despite the band's cheesy name, Happy Family probably won't show up on a Norman Rockwell plate any time soon—unless the typical happy American family now blasts Stooges records during breakfast and takes vacations to CBGB. (Which, of course, would not be a bad thing.)

This Austin band of three gals and a guy lives between the raw grunge of the Stooges and the minimalism of Scrawl, with simple, striking music full of confidence and wit. Comparisons to other female-driven bands like Salem 66 and the Raincoats wouldn't be off base, but Happy Family gives each of its songs, from the swaggering "Cavemen in Neckties" to the hilarious "Big Ass on Fire," a distinctly personal flavor. Vocalist Cindy Widner comes off like a younger Exene, alternately angry and cunning, while guitarist Laura Creedle coaxes a variety of fuzzy sounds from her ax. Bassist Julia Austin (ex of the Wild Seeds) adds a few melodic punches of her own, while drummer Rich Malley does his gender proud by holding it all together.

With *Lucky*, Happy Family simultaneously strips rock to its basics and propels it into the future. Welcome them to your neighborhood.

Lisa Gidley

TANITA TIKARAM

Everybody's Angel

Reprise

Combining the husky warmth of Tracy Chapman's vocals with the pastoral soul of recent Van Morrison, Tanita Tikaram's fine third LP promises sweet'n'easy listening fun. Or does it? Actually a whole stew of heated emotions bubbles just under the surface, creating delicious, unsettling tension. Sometimes Tikaram flirts with blandness, content to coast on the funky horns and fat drumbeats, then, she'll emit an anguished shudder or forbidding growl, admitting the poise is a pose. And while the lyrics can try too hard to be poetic, usually they reflect the confusion of a heart in distress.

Just when your patience threatens to expire, Tikaram reveals a knack for the telling phrase that cuts through all the bull, observing, "I know your kind all too well" in "Swear by Me," then sarcastically declaring that "Hovering on the edge of life / Is so exciting" in the perky "Hot Pork Sandwiches." Rich and intriguing, *Everybody's Angel* expands with each hearing. Nifty stuff.

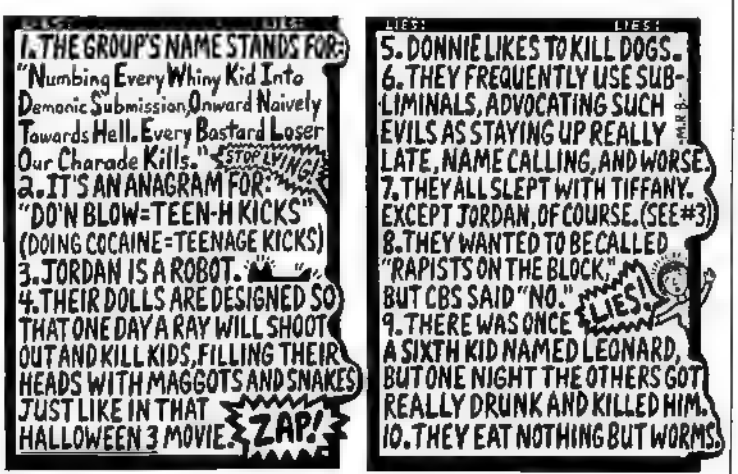
Jon Young

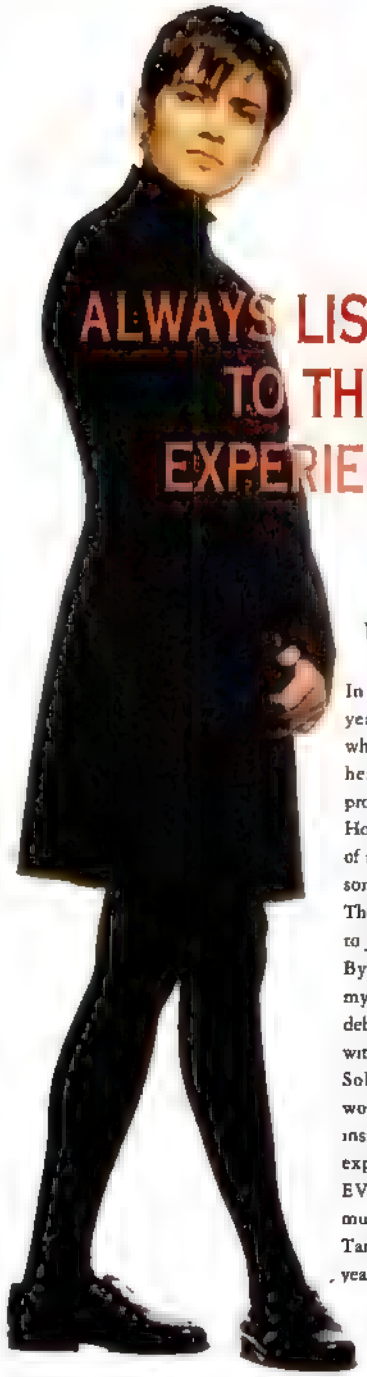
THE DIVINYLS

Divinyls

Virgin

Australia's Divinyls give great hook: the kind that's instantly memorable, is filled with pop/hard-rock flourishes, and carries the rest of the number. The problem is, they don't write great songs. In-


LIES!
1. THE GROUP'S NAME STANDS FOR: "Numbing Every Whiny Kid Into Demonic Submission, Onward Naively Towards Hell. Every Bastard Loser Our Charade Kills."
STOP LYING!
2. IT'S AN ANAGRAM FOR: "DO'N BLOW=TEEN-H KICKS" (DOING COCAINE=TEENAGE KICKS)
3. JORDAN IS A ROBOT.
4. THEIR DOLLS ARE DESIGNED SO THAT ONE DAY A RAY WILL SHOOT OUT AND KILL KIDS, FILLING THEIR HEADS WITH MAGGOTS AND SNAKES JUST LIKE IN THAT HALLOWEEN 3 MOVIE.
ZAP!
LIES!
5. DONNIE LIKES TO KILL DOGS.
6. THEY FREQUENTLY USE SUBLIMINALS, ADVOCATING SUCH EVILS AS STAYING UP REALLY LATE, NAME CALLING, AND WORSE.
7. THEY ALL SLEPT WITH TIFFANY. EXCEPT JORDAN, OF COURSE. (SEE #3)
8. THEY WANTED TO BE CALLED "RAPISTS ON THE BLOCK," BUT CBS SAID "NO."
LIES!!
9. THERE WAS ONCE A SIXTH KID NAMED LEONARD, BUT ONE NIGHT THE OTHERS GOT REALLY DRUNK AND KILLED HIM.
10. THEY EAT NOTHING BUT WORMS.



ALWAYS LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE.

Well, maybe not always

In 1988, we signed an exotic 19-year-old named Tanita Tikaram, who just months earlier had made her London club debut. With producers Rod Argent and Peter Van Hooke, Tanita created a compilation of alluring melodies—some somber, some sprightly—that quickly had The New York Times comparing her to Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen. By the spring of 1989, this mysteriously mature newcomer's debut album, ANCIENT HEART, with its sultry smash, "Twist In My Sobriety," had sold millions worldwide. But if you absolutely insist on listening to the voice of experience, let us suggest EVERYBODY'S ANGEL, the much-anticipated new release by Tanita Tikaram, who, at a ripe 21 years, has finally come of age.

Tanita Tikaram ✲ *Everybody's Angel*

THE NEW ALBUM

Featuring "Only The Ones We Love"

VH-1 HAS SELECTED TANITA TIKARAM AS APRIL'S ARTIST OF THE MONTH. *Watch for her.*

Look for Tanita Tikaram's new home video Ancient Heart.
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Serious Spirit

BY RICHARD GEHR

TODAY IS JANUARY 15 IN MY reality, and two insane Presidents are still wagging their lethal weenies at each other via CNN's airwaves. In their honor, I've been listening to (mainly acoustic) music that doesn't just dance through danger like gracefully loping South African protesters. By the time you read this, we might have to change this column's jaunty name to "Beat World." So shed for a few maudlin moments the notion that world music means dance-happy ethnic types shaking carefree booty in primitive tropical paradises, with or without political lyrics, and suck up some serious spirit.

Outside the liberal Western folk-whiner tradition of the past 30 years, you'll generally find men with guitars singing heartfelt verses yearning for those halcyon days when children didn't feel older than their parents and Ruby didn't take her love to town. Retired schoolteacher **Boubacar Traore**, for example, picks elegantly simple acoustic guitar patterns imported from America's country blues and infused with the Mandingo earnestness of his northwest Mali home. On *Mariama* (Stern's, 598 Broadway, New York, NY 10012) this gentle-voiced black Confucius urges patience, temperance, respect, and an unusually sensuous let's-live-for-today-baby kind of love. Somewhat more celebratory, but no less nostalgic, guitarist **Eduardo Falu** dances like a cat through the intricate lyrical mazes of *zambas, gatos, malambos,* and other nortangos from Argentina's pampas and highlands on *Resolana* (Nimbus). A classically trained guitarist completely at home in his country's exquisite folk tradition, Falu also sets poems about leaving, returning, remembering, and forgetting to beautiful crying in-your-sangria music on this fatalist-friendly disc.

Some of the many faces of acoustic music.

While Traore and Falu sing and strum about love, family, and tradition in cozy vernacular and secular tones, other musicians actually *act out* the shit. In his self-aggrandizing autobiography/dissertation *Drumming at the Edge* of What Could be Tart, Sharp Mini-anthems, you get meandering lyrics with a few pithy guitar lines, all leading up to killer choruses.

Christina Amphlett's voice is one of the more distinctive in rock, exuding carnality and innocence simultaneously, although at some times she sounds eerily close to Pat Benatar. The Divinyls predilection for stretching out the material (two songs clock in over five minutes) dilutes the punch of what could be tough little bursts of sound. Length weakens the pouting "Love School," with its sinuous drum beat, as well as "Bullet." When the duo starts writing entire tunes with as much craftsmanship as it puts into its hooks, the Divinyls will be a major force to reckon with.

Amy Linden

of Magic, Grateful Dead percussionist **Mickey Hart** describes drumming as a meditation that essentially keeps him from biting the heads off small dogs through sheer

existential spite. If Dead drums intermittently get you off, the South Korean percussion-vocal quartet **SamulNori** presents the real trance-barrage thing on *Record of Changes* (CMP, 155 W. 72nd St., #704, New York, NY 10023). No shaman works without a drum, and SamulNori's rituals are a sexually charged ebbing and flowing cacophony of clattering drums, gongs, and chants. As in Balinese gamelan, torrential crescendos precede sanguine respites, like fire and ice. Tonight I'll be drinking and listening to "P'u Sal," a piece inspired by the Korean notion of *han*, which, according to the liner notes, "includes a sense of profound regret and a collective historical consciousness." SamulNori's tradition possesses an all-too-modern edge.

At the opposite end of the ritual spectrum are the minimal and mystic flutes heard on **Kudsi Erguner**'s *Sufi Music of Turkey* (CMP). Musical preservationists Erguner and baby brother Süleyman lay down languorous improvisations on melodies from the 17th and 18th centuries. But their roots extend further back, to the 13th-century teachings of Mevlana Jahahi'ddin Roumi, a theologian whose disciples are Sufidom's photogenic "whirling dervishes." The Erguners' music is unexpectedly solemn and sober, however, with unison *ney* flutes (sometimes accompanied by a sparse frame drum) that take their sweet time wandering around tunes that sound as though they were extracted from some timeless source. You can easily lose yourself in these slow, patient (equals virtuous) meanderings.

All of the above acoustic music, to different degrees, signifies a tradition that sounds as fresh today as when it first blossomed (can Guns N' Roses say the same?). But if such a thing as cybertrad could be contemplated, it would probably sound a lot like *Mouth Music* (Rykodisc), a serene mutant hybrid of Gaelic a cappella and dubbed-up percussive Afropop concocted by **Martin Swan** and singer **Talitha Mackenzie**. Inspired by David Byrne and Brian Eno's masterpiece of intercultural thievery, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, *Mouth Music* pulses, gurgles, and swooshes along like a digitalized shortwave jam session between yesterday and tomorrow.

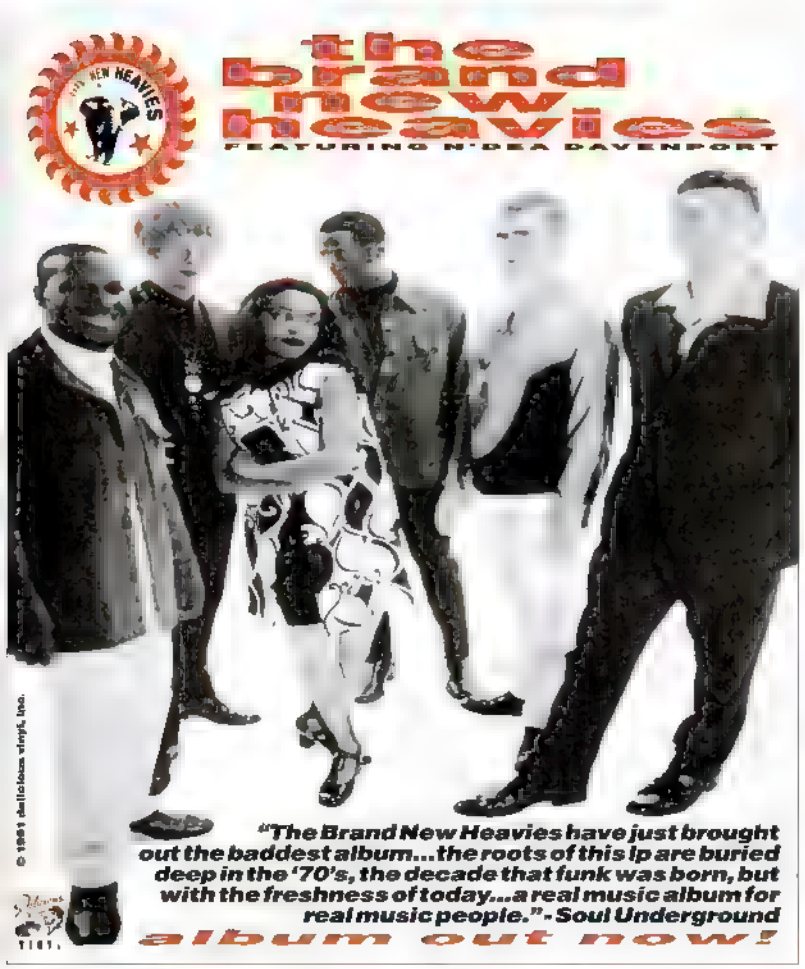
WONDERFUL WORLD

Hassan Erraji and Arabesque with Sabara *la Dounia* (Riverboat/Stern's)
The Wretched Refuse String Band *The Wretched Refuse String Band* (Betrayal)
Natraj *The Goat Also Gallops* (Accurate)
Gnawa Music of Marrakesh *Night Spirit Masters* (Axiom/Mango)

TAD
8-Way Santa
Sub Pop

The 300-pound ex-butcher Tad no longer makes music solely about being a 300-pound ex-butcher, which he certainly is, or about being an inbred redneck from the backwoods of the Pacific Northwest, which he probably isn't. I consider that a smart move. Unfortunately, Tad and his band TAD's *8-Way Santa* is about as adventurous as a Black Crowes record. That's not necessarily bad in and of itself, but *8-Way Santa*'s melodic stuff isn't too memorable. The music is missing the impact it once had, and it's no more original or unique than TAD's first two albums.

"Jinx" is the sole standout, and it's available as a single. "Wired God"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and "Delinquent" feature streamlined rhythm guitar grind juxtaposed with a catchy chorus. The more metallic songs suggest early-'70s ZZ Top

on Valium, and the layered guitars of "3-D Witch Hunt" and "Plague Years" sound like a less imaginative J. Mascis. These formulas would be more effective if they weren't so predictable. TAD has shucked the rules of one game for another one. It's no improvement.

Steve Erickson

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Voices
Mesa

Voices is a swell three-CD collection of choral music (loosely defined) from the world over. As such, it's being marketed as "world music," which it is only in the sense that all music is. While the collection is weighted a bit more heavily in favor of classical Western choral music than I would like, it nonetheless serves as an intriguing sampler for rock-weary ears.

As with any compilation this size, there're a few clinkers. The new age-ish contributions authored by Paul Winter and David Hykes, for instance, seem particularly out of place next to the genuine artistry of the Bulgarian Women's Choir and the Mendocino Camp Sufi Choir. Some of the selections seem to have been chosen strictly to lend to the collection's eclecticism—there's a sense of "cover all the bases" here that bothers me a little.

But I guess if you've never heard Tibetan monks chanting *om* this is going to sound like a revelation. And if you have, there's still a lot of stuff on *Voices* that will tickle your fancy. The aforementioned Bulgarian Women's Choir, though better represented on the two volumes of *Le Mystere des Voixes Bulgares* put out by Elektra, is something you should become acquainted with. Real soon.

Jim Greer

BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL

Phil Ochs

BY JON W. POSES

JULY 1975 WAS ONE OF THE MOST bizarre months of my life. Each day, first in the morning, then in the afternoon, I went to Elmhurst Hospital in Queens, New York, a less-than-perfect city-run facility, to visit my older brother, Peter. He had been diagnosed as manic-depressive.

First our parents agonized (ever see New York cops take someone out of your dining room cuffed?); then they committed their son. It took three weeks for Peter, initially suicidal but now sedated on Thorazine, to move from the illness's frenzied high to its painfully silent low. Taking advantage of loosened hospital restrictions—after several weeks he had been moved from a locked ward to a situation that allowed outdoor privileges—he went AWOL and left the state. "That's when my synapses snapped," he said to me once on a return visit, able to joke about his illness only long after the fact. For seven years he remained on lithium, the now widely used mood stabilizer. He's since become a licensed family and marital counselor, having completed his Ph.D. with a dissertation titled "A Study of Parents of Manic-Depressive Children: Unresolved Grief, Marital Satisfaction, Adaptability, and Cohesion."

Phil Ochs, who hung himself in his sister's Far Rockaway, Queens, house 15 years ago this April 9, was far less fortunate. My brother loved Ochs, the uncompromising patriot, the rebel with causes. I'd become a fan too, having seen Ochs on numerous occasions.

An astute, acerbic journalist who knew rhythmically and lyrically how to couch his sarcastic wit in meter, Ochs, in addition to achieving success with albums such as *All the News That's Fit to Sing* (1964), *In Concert* (1966), *Tape From California* (1968), and *Rehearsals for Retirement* (1969), contributed to a variety of alternative publications. Ochs was—along with Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman, and others—a Yippie; if there had been a "Chicago Eight," Ochs would have been the eighth.

So it's no accident that, a generation later, Billy Bragg (politicized by today's standards) greatly admires Phil Ochs. Last year on *The Internationale*, the Brit's seven-song CD, Bragg adapted Ochs's traditional adaptation of "Joe Hill," calling his version "I Dreamed I Saw Phil Ochs Last Night." In interviews, it's not uncommon to hear Bragg mention Ochs; in fact, Bragg was so taken by Ochs that he befriended Phil's daughter, Meegan. Through her, he learned of brother Michael, who oversees all of Phil's posthumous releases. In tribute, Bragg delivered liner notes for Rhino's recently issued *Phil Ochs' There and Now—Live in Vancouver, 1968*, licensed through A&M. The acoustic set includes previously unreleased renditions of "Outside of a Small Circle of Friends," "Pleasures of the Harbor," and "I Kill Therefore I Am," and 11 other selections that in many instances appeared previously only as heavily orchestrated material.

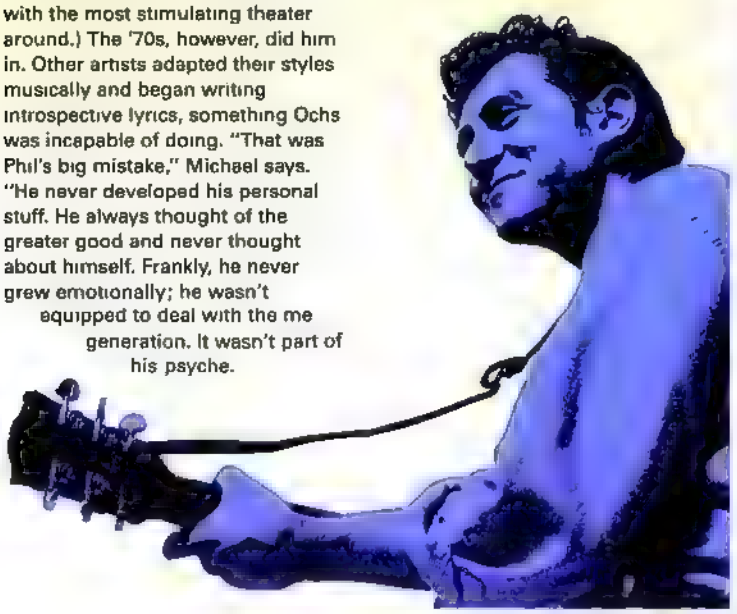
The '60s were kind to Ochs. (As Michael says, they provided him with the most stimulating theater around.) The '70s, however, did him in. Other artists adapted their styles musically and began writing introspective lyrics, something Ochs was incapable of doing. "That was Phil's big mistake," Michael says. "He never developed his personal stuff. He always thought of the greater good and never thought about himself. Frankly, he never grew emotionally; he wasn't equipped to deal with the me generation. It wasn't part of his psyche.

"The high point of Phil's career," Michael adds, somewhat sarcastically, "was when John Wayne attacked him in print. When they did the *Playboy* interview with Wayne and asked him why he made the movie *The Green Berets*, he said, 'To counterattack the lies that Phil Ochs and Joan Baez were spreading.' Phil was in seventh heaven that John Wayne knew who he was."

One night during my brother's period of hospitalization, I caught an ad in the *Village Voice* advertising "Phil Ochs's Last Concert." That night, some 16 years ago, Ochs stumbled onto the Folk City stage wired, drunk, and yelling incoherent insults. Profane and rude, his paranoia running rampant, Ochs, then 35, couldn't tune his guitar or play the "hits" his audience demanded. Vietnam deflated, his protest songs—"I Ain't Marchin' Anymore," "Cops of the World," "Love Me, I'm a Liberal" and "Santo Domingo"—seemed irrelevant. This was a tragedy of the worst order unfolding, a humiliating, self-destructive act. Most attending didn't—*couldn't*—understand what they saw.

I did. As others demanded their money back, as Ochs drove them from the venue by hurling violent epithets, I watched, fascinated. It might as well have been my brother onstage. I didn't need anyone to tell me he was at the high end of the cycle.

Nine months later he was gone.



PHIL OCHS/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES

UNDER GROUND

From behind the pristine, unassuming facade of Muzak Communications sprung a musical movement that changed the face of alternative rock. CARLO McCORMICK tells the strange tale of the Seattle-Muzak connection.

WHAT DO GORILLA, LOVE BATTERY, Mudhoney, Sub Pop Records, Swallow, TAD, and the Walkabouts all have in common besides being part of the phenomenal Seattle music scene? All of them contain members who have been, or presently are, employed by Muzak.

Muzak, the word most people use to describe the easy-listening syrupy schlock commonly heard in elevators, bowling alleys, supermarkets, and dentist chairs, isn't actually a musical genre, but the copyrighted trademark (MUZAK®) of a corporation that came into being in the mid-1930s. The name recognition of the firm is so great that it's widely used as a generic term for most any manner of insipidly bland, Mantovani strings–like musical tripe, much in the same way Kleenex is used to describe any paper tissue into which we evacuate the contents of our nose.

So how is it that a bunch of people who've been responsible for some of the most brutally aggressive and radical music in recent memory happened to work at a company whose musical process and product most of us contemptuously hold to be nauseatingly corporate, co-opted, commercialized, commodified, and constipated?

However incompatible the tastes and politics of Muzak and its employees may be, the company gainfully employed a large community of musically and socially transgressive locals, paying their rents and unknowingly nurturing the scene they were to become part of. Recalling those years in which everyone working there was excitedly "turning each other on to one another's music," many of them, such as Ron Rudzitus, singer and guitarist for Love Battery, talk of how they looked forward to work, "not because of the job, but just to hang out with friends."

According to Bruce Pavitt, who along with former Muzak coworker Jonathan Poneman founded Sub Pop, Seattle's foremost independent record label, "The only thing you could do with a job like that was to listen to the hardest music. Big Black, the Butthole Surfers, and Scratch Acid probably got more play than anything else in the tape cleaning room where we all worked. If I hadn't got my job at Muzak, I doubt that I would have developed a relationship with people like the guys in Mudhoney."

Jonathan Poneman also remembers the communal spirit of that time, but emphasizes the repulsion they all felt working for Muzak, which he describes as a primary factor in the honing of their confrontational edge. "Not only was there this constant creative détente or exchange of ideas," he says, "but our experiences working for this organization inspired Bruce and me to create something that put an emphasis on the creativity instead of the commodity, on the raw and rebellious instead of the easy and digestible." Poneman describes Muzak as his "first real exposure to Orwellian corporate fascism with a smiling face . . . The environment was as false as the product. They'd dress up typical management policies and techniques of labor control in the clothing of false humanism and user-friendliness."

Poneman witnessed Muzak's dramatic expansion beyond its typical shopping-mall schmaltz and efficiency-enhancing tunes-to-toil-by, known to the trade as "environmental music," into the rapid-growth industry called "foreground music" (which includes "adult contemporary," "jazz," "New Age," and "classic pop" hits).

"I find foreground music to be even more repugnant than Muzak," he says. "Basically, it comes down to taking songs rich with subjective meaning and emotional content, sapping them of their meaning, then exploiting and reshaping them into the musical equivalent of track lighting for spoiled whining yuppies."

Bruce Funkhouser, vice president of programming at Muzak, and a man whom not even Muzak's greatest antagonists seem to harbor any ill will toward, naturally has a very different idea of his company and how it relates to the Seattle music scene. "The object of environmental music," he explains, "is to create an atmosphere in which people feel relaxed, comfortable, and better able to concentrate on what they're doing. It's not manipulative in that it makes people buy more or work any harder than they want to work. All it can do is help to relieve some of the anxieties, distractions, and tediums of the workplace."

Denying Poneman's assertion that foreground music strips songs of their meaning, Funkhouser says that unlike environmental programming, which is more unobtrusive, the primary purpose of foreground music is to establish an identity, mood, or image for a business establishment, and thus relies greatly on the particular meanings and associations a song may evince in its audience.

"I think what happened," Funkhouser says, "was that a generation brought up in the '60s and '70s came into their own as owners, managers, and bosses in all of these businesses and said, 'This [environmental music] is not the type of stuff I want. I worked to rock'n'roll when I went to high school, I worked to rock'n'roll when I went to college, and I want to work to rock'n'roll now.' "

Even though a few musicians such as Ron Rudzitus and Gorilla drummer Brian Nelson still work at Muzak, most believe it's unlikely there will be another scene there because the atmosphere and management attitudes have become increasingly intolerant and uptight. Many echo the sentiments of one individual who says that now everyone at Muzak "runs around in suits with shit on their noses."

Perhaps, but to Funkhouser, Muzak continues to be "a great source of a day job. If you're a musician and you need work, just come to us."

Jim Morrison

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was acutely uncomfortable, hiding behind unkempt hair, a thick beard, and an excess of avoirdupois. With a mischievous snicker he talked about the great joy in life of being "out there—on the very edge," and suggested that to spend that evening trading drinks with Jim one-on-one might be an appropriate way for me to do some edge testing. Knowing Jim was trying to suck me into something that was only going to lead to trouble, I replied, "Jim, being on the edge is terrific. The trick is not to bleed."

Jim was different with everyone, as if he was somehow matching his psyche to yours. I have seen him range from beautiful to horrific—smashing a studio IBM electric typewriter with an emergency fire ax, bringing our office manager to the point of tears wondering what *she* had done to *him*—which was in fact nothing. Jim's anger seemed to come in fits, and once the explosion had occurred, a nervous calm took over. The great danger of Jim's anger was that you never knew whether it was real or whether he was putting it on. But you just didn't take those chances.

To get sucked into Jim's entourage, however, was to trade your turf for his, with both of you losers. Besides, I had seen an unsettling side of him. If you adored Jim, as did his lady, Pam, he could and would put you down with heartless cruelty and withering sarcasm, toying with you like a cat toys with a ball of yarn. The same if you wanted something from him. He made you jump through hoops. Jim's gifts were his to give, but only on his terms.

At the conclusion of the sixth and final album under our agreement, Jim and I talked about re-signing. To re-sign the Doors, you addressed each of the constituencies discreetly—the lawyer, manager, Jim, and the "boys." Jim listened to my well-reasoned argument, his face showing no emotion. And when I had finished, he said, "Jac, make your best offer and we'll compare it to CBS's." For someone who had been so close to the group, to think that they were even entertaining leaving the label, although perhaps unrealistic, was excruciatingly painful. Jim said it all with a straight face, walked away, looked at me over his shoulder, and smiled that smile. I still don't know whether he was teasing or serious. But we did re-sign the group for an extra album, which was to become *L.A. Woman*.

continued on page 106

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Morrissey

continued from page 52

Everyday folks . . .

"Everyday folks with everyday tales of everyday sadness."

We both howl with laughter at this.

Does Morrissey think that he is as important in the lives of his followers as the New York Dolls and Patti Smith were to him back in the days?

"I think I'm more important because to begin with I sell more records than they ever did, and by the tone of letters and conversations a lot of them know me more intimately than they know their own friends. Well, they believe they know me more intimately, though in fact they don't really."

Do you find it all a bit disconcerting?

"It's a very awkward situation. I get very embarrassed and self conscious because I feel that if I were to sneeze when I met one of them it would be described halfway around America."

He must by now accept that for many of these obsessive fans, sex is an intense part of his appeal. Does his oft-stated unavailability serve to heighten this?

"I don't think it increases it, I think it's part of it. The confessional aspect is part of it; being very, very open about innermost feelings is, I think, quite unusual. I simply don't believe it when somebody tells me that physically I am what they've always wanted. If they don't know me personally, which is usually the case, then it becomes very abstract. I certainly never, ever feel, even in my most self-opinionated moment, that I am a sex symbol. But to some people I am."

You often say that the energy that others expend on love and sex, you put into your work . . .

"That's very, very true because I think human beings are only capable of concentrating on one thing . . . mostly. I think you either go one way or the other."

GIVEN MORRISSEY'S CEREBRAL BENT AND HIS well-known aversion to dance music, did it irk him to see former confederate Johnny Marr working with the New Order/Pet Shop Boys aggregate Electronic?

"I stayed awake for three nights worrying," he remarks tartly. "No, I don't think anything at all crossed my mind. I don't monitor Johnny's movements. I don't know anything about his life other than what people tell me. I thought the record Electronic released was totally useless."

Getting Away With It?

"Yes, very apt title."

This is more like it. You don't have much time for the Pet Shop Boys then?

"No, not at all."

Some see you as kindred spirits, I prod.

"I get very angry with artists who have it easy," says Morrissey gravely, "who don't really put that much into what they do, who fall into favor with people who expect nothing of them."

But for all you know, Neil Tennant may be stretching to the utmost of his abilities.

"I didn't mention Neil Tennant—I was talking about Engelbert Humperdink."

Another well-worn Morrissey theme is that pop, as we knew it, has ceased to exist, that for one reason or another the form has been systematically drained of every drop of vitality.

"I still believe that, and as time goes by I believe it more strongly; I do see an enormous amount of mental decay. I think it's over, I really do."

Cause of death, Quincy?

"I think possibly the realization that the albums and the concerts which have become important are those which cost a lot of money and are a lot of trouble to produce. I think that's because so many artists are managed by accountants now. Music isn't as special in 1991 as it was in the years when you could watch punk unfolding. Because punk was something that was happening for the very, very first time; there is very little that occurs now in music that is really happening for the first time."

"The Cocteau Twins make me vomit on sight. They're outstandingly unappealing on every human level; they look awful, their interviews are awful, and their records are just utter stupidity."

Thus, Morrissey explains, the recurring fascination with the culturally fertile period of his early youth.

"You look back at the films and music of that time and you just hear a certain appealing naiveté, an innocence that no longer exists. Now we all know far too much for our own good. Back then it didn't matter if you didn't become a millionaire, it didn't matter if you didn't eke out some fantastic career for yourself. It was just good enough to exist, and to have a bit of fun.

"I think the world has speeded up in every way, and that people in 1991 are heavily burdened with this enormous pressure to be perfect, to be enormously interesting and successful. I think that's unfortunate and it makes people very unhappy."

Continuing on this dolorous note, Morrissey laments the passing of another much-eulogized commodity—Englishness.

"England is not England in any real sense of the word, it has been internationalized, and that's screechingly evident wherever you look around the country. The English people are not strong enough to defend their sense of history. Patriotism doesn't really matter anymore. So I think England has died."

Last year he found his Anglocentric sentiments echoed in the unlikeliest of places: "The only time I thought Mrs. Thatcher made a sensible statement in her entire career was her defense of sterling. She was laughed out of Parliament."

He refers to Thatcher's stand against the prospect of a single European currency, which Morrissey thinks "has to happen. If we meet in two years, you and I will be speaking French."

So what was Morrissey's reaction when the Iron Lady was finally hauled off to the scrap yard?

"Well, not the reaction that people may expect me to have. I thought the way she was quite literally publicly beheaded was outrageous. I found it astonishingly un-English and very strange."

Momentito—have we all been misinterpreting "Margaret on the Guillotine" all these years?!

"Her policies, I thought, were the work of the Devil. I thought she was purely, intentionally evil," Morrissey grins. "But it's impossible to deny that she was a phenomenon, and you couldn't help but overdiscuss her. The blunder wasn't that she was decapitated, but that she hasn't effectively been replaced. I think that John Major is in nobody's mind a Prime Minister; he seems to have no human presence at all."

To my shame I repeat a current rumor concerning the sex life of the apparently personality-free Major.

"Well, that's the first interesting thing I've heard about him. Now he deserves to be Prime Minister."

There follows an ill-advised attempt on my part to pursue a line of questioning about northern English culture—not in relation to the current Manchester scene, but as it pertains to Morrissey's work, to his iconography.

"What, like James Dean and Joe D'Allessandro?"

No, obviously I . . . knew . . .

"Well, I don't consider myself part of a line of great northern comedians, if that's what you mean."

Oh, I don't know—

"I think that has to be the last word."

As I don my galoshes for the trek back toward central Manchester, I ask whether Morrissey has yet had a chance to see *The Krays*, the celluloid biography of the twin London gangsters referenced in the exquisite "The Last of the Famous International Playboys." He hasn't, but remains curious as to its content. It transpires that Morrissey was himself name-checked by Reggie Kray in his recently published book. He plucks the tome from his enviable library and indicates the relevant passage:

"There was even a hit single about us, Morrissey's 'The Last of the Famous International Playboys' in January 1989. I liked the tune, but the lyrics in their entirety were lacking a little. They came quite close. . . ."

"Just my luck," sighs Morrissey. "I can't get away from critics."

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Virtual Reality

continued from page 80

Of course, McKenna knew better than to conflate the two technologies. "Virtual reality," he said, succinctly clarifying the difference, "is dog shit compared to 5 grams of psilocybin in silent darkness." Nonetheless, he was eloquent about the value of yoking VR to the energies of psychedelia: "The thing that I fear for virtual reality is that it will be a kind of technomasturbation. How do we get the unexpected, the astonishing, the utterly unpredictable and the terrifying into a loop of what is essentially a manufactured product put together in production facilities to sell? The only way this can be done is to say, look, the core of humanness is the psychedelic experience. Any technology of information transfer that does not set its sights on becoming a simulacrum of the psychedelic experience is leading away from what is human, and I think this community probably needs to think about this and hear this."

And the community did, till well past Timothy Leary's bedtime. On into Sunday's early hours, Barlow and McKenna drew out the Cyberthon Nation's passionately, pompously, mush-headedly, and sometimes brilliantly articulated hopes and fears for the world its adopted technology would create.

By the time the guru-fest ended I was satisfied I'd gotten what I came for. R.U. Sirius stood smiling in the middle of the thinning crowd and seemed to feel the same way. "It's amazing how many things remind me of the '60s these days," he said, beaming. "Just a few weeks ago I was at this meeting of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and it was just like an SDS meeting, except that everybody made like fifty thousand dollars a year."

Floating on my cultural high, I was determined now to stay awake through what remained of Cyberthon's 24 hours, but by 4:30 A.M., I succumbed to exhaustion and nausea and retreated to the fluorescent, fart-filled air of Cyberthon's dreaded "nap rooms." Sprawled on institutional carpeting next to a fat and loudly snoring neohippie, I tried to sleep but my mind's eye kept hurling me into computer screens. I wondered briefly if I was suffering from the "simulator sickness" experienced by pilot trainees after long bouts of simulated flight.

A few hours later, I awoke groggy and just in time for the final panel. Jaron Lanier, William Gibson, and *Whole Earth Catalog*–founder Stewart Brand were to lead a discussion loosely limited to "Social and Cultural Implications of Virtual Reality." As I took my seat, Brand—who has been around the block a few times—was crustily warning us that raising expectations about VR too high could produce a backlash of disappointment capable of crushing the fragile community. Unfriendly morning sunlight poked in through a side door, and a hangover mood snuck through the room.

Through the rest of the session, crankiness kept rearing its head. Gibson did his best to cover up his native technological dystopianism, but couldn't resist worrying that "some of the people that read those first books of mine seem to have sort of missed the level of irony [lurking in his seductive depictions of cyberspace]." Soon after, a foghorn-voiced guy stood up and denounced the room as "a bunch of technoweenies whining about who's going to fund their latest fad." Later, when nice guy Tom Furness rosily suggested that the best way to prepare our children for the challenges of the information age was to teach them the classics, he was swiftly butt-kicked as an ethnocentrist.

Was this a dash of Altamont spicing my virtual Woodstock? As the session ended, and Cyberthon came to a close, I said warm goodbyes and played with a few last demos, but I couldn't shake the grip of a lingering bad vibe. It was a feeling of imminent disaster so vague I only managed to put my finger on it weeks later, when Bruce Sterling named it in a phone conversation.

"It's the hidden tragedy of bohemia," he told me in his Austin, Texas, drawl. "Bohemia is this area of industrial bourgeois society where you can take people who are young and kind of crazy or trouble-making or whatever and put them into this kinda airtight chamber and expose them to new things before they hit the rest of society. . . . And, it's like, as long as you're a no-account punk hippie radical and you eat sardines off the floor, you can do whatever you like. But once you hit on something that's really genuinely useful, all the rules change. You're just not allowed to do that. They take it out of the test chamber then, and then, you know, Mitsubishi gets it, Ford gets it, AT&T gets it. . . . It's happened hundreds of times over the last three hundred years."

And maybe it would happen again. Maybe the dreadlocked visionaries and the new psychedelicists would have a say in the future of virtual reality no longer than the guerrilla hackers of the early PC days had their hands on the joystick of the computer industry—which is to say, just long enough to make a few of them very rich and leave the rest of us scratching our heads and wondering how we could have ever believed that some *gadget* would cure all that ails us as a culture.

But for the 24 hours of Cyberthon, it had been easy to believe. So easy that it had almost made sense when, toward the end of Jaron Lanier's talk, a young man had risen and asked about the possibility of encountering, well, you know, *metaphysical* entities in virtual reality. Like, gods and stuff?

Lanier hadn't batted an eye. The question was out there, but it did dovetail neatly with one of his favorite pocket theses: virtual reality as mystical tech, as the last, best hope for Western civilization to reassimilate the everyday experience of multiple realities that was commonplace in other cultures. Drugs didn't do it, Eastern religions didn't do it, but virtual reality will do it. Virtual reality will free us from our alienation, from our centuries-old cycle of doomed flights toward transcendence—precisely because virtual reality is a gadget, and our culture fetishizes gadgets like nothing else.

"The typical emotional relationship we have with gadgets," he said, "is something like, Well, I'm a man playing with an external shiny black thing, and by being able to manipulate it I can forget that I'm a wet messy thing that's gonna die. And then what sort of happens with VR is you push the technology even further, to this juncture . . . of being able to create experience as a whole. And at the point where you have that, there's almost this pleasant surprise—the quality of this technology is different than we thought it would be. . . . It's really warm and communicative, it's got a more feminine warmth, perhaps.

"It's like if you follow the technological path for a long enough time you discover that the emotions and the mythic meaning start to have a different tendency."

Hendrix

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Are we not impeding the flowering of the new and the now? Should we not be killing our idols?

The '60s is the latest wing added to our museum culture (the '70s wing is already under construction, as it has been for some years now). Museum culture makes it possible to reexperience the '60s, at the same time making it impossible for people to put into practice the ideals of the '60s (breaching the gap between art and life, perpetual play, et cetera) in their lives now. In order to relive the '60s, what is important about that overmythologized decade has been killed in a process that is part neutering, part necrophelia.

The failure of the '60s, implied in it becoming mummified in a museum, lets everyone off the hook; it's easier to live with that period if you take for granted the idea that its unrealistic dreams were always doomed. (As the situationists used to say, "Be reasonable, demand the impossible.") So you can defer your responsibility to remake your life as an adventure.

But Hendrix has somehow survived this deadly process, his music still potent and still a reproach to our prematurely foregone possibilities. After all these years he still challenges us to break the bounds/bonds of our "measly little world." He's the perfect hero for the multicultural '90s, our postmodern replay of the '60s.

That's why he's on the cover of SPIN. Jimi Hendrix, R.R.I.P.— refuses to rest in peace.

Jim Morrison

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SO MANY MEMORIES. ESCAPING WITH JIM from the Long Island concert at which the Doors played with Simon and Garfunkel, crowds jostling the car and pounding on the windows, with Jim sitting in the back seat, unbelieving yet loving every minute.

Jim drunk and almost unable to come onstage at the Fillmore, getting into a fistfight with his manager and wildly swinging the heavy microphone stand—out of control and out of his world.

The famous "young lion" black-and-white photography session with Jim at his most feline, appearing to posture outrageously, and the camera capturing the essence and the depth of his sexuality. Two years later, when Jim was more bloated, someone looked at those pictures and asked, "Did he ever really look like that?" And the answer was "Yes, once, for twenty minutes."

When all the *Rashomon* aspects of the Doors are dissected ad nauseam, one powerful memory lingers and it is more in my heart than in my mind. On February 15, 1968, the doorbell rang in my Los Angeles home. It was the evening of my son Adam's tenth birthday. There was Jim, now a star, shifting uncertainly from foot to foot, clutching an erratically wrapped present for my musically inclined son. He came in, sat quietly with Adam, and showed him how to play the kalimba, an African thumb piano. They sat there for an hour, fully absorbed—two children alone in their own world.

Michael Callen

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like red badges of courage in a war against a sex-negative society"—an article was published in the *New York Native*, a major gay newspaper, that sent shockwaves through the community. It was titled "We Know Who We Are: Two Gay Men Declare War on Promiscuity."

The point of the article was lost on most in the gay community, many of whom have still not forgiven Callen or Berkowitz. It was a medical point, not a moral one, Callen says. "We were *testifying* about the urgent need to 'avoid the exchange of potentially infectious bodily fluids.' "

Members of the GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis) and other critics felt that Callen and Berkowitz were "shouting guilt from the rooftops," and urging gay men to "follow along in self-flagellation."

"People actually thought I was blaming people for being sick. I was naive. I hadn't been political. I just thought, I'll write this and we'll have a much needed, long overdue debate. I thought most people would know I wasn't being moralistic, that I *loved* being a slut. But people were stunned. It was unfathomable. People walked up to me on the street and spat in my face."

The *New York Native* had initially agreed to run a follow-up article titled "How to Have Sex in an Epidemic," but pulled out as a result of the controversy. "The second one was the important one," says Callen. "The first one was rhetorical. It simply declared the problem. It said: There's an epidemic and we need to change the way we have sex. The second part detailed *how* to change. How to *keep* having sex, only safely. But since the practical second part never followed, it came across as if in the middle of this crisis we were just smacking people, saying, 'You boys have to stop.' "

Despite the controversy, which had sparked explosive debates from coast to coast, Callen persisted. In the end, he took his own tax-return money and published what has since gone down as the first safe sex manifesto: a 48-page booklet titled *How to Have Sex in an Epidemic: One Approach*.

The points put forth in that booklet have since become the nucleus of safe sex education programs throughout the world, including the once critical GMHC. Few remember, or were ever told, how it all started. "It was hard enough," says Callen, "to be sick and fighting for my own life. To be attacked for trying to save the lives of others was deeply wounding."

"We were being attacked by people whose advice was to play Donna Reed . . . to have *fewer* partners, whatever that meant, and to *know* your partners. But that advice was dangerously inadequate. I think the sense was that, just because a few of us died of a disease, it doesn't mean we have to stop the sexual revolution."

Callen has managed to carry over his fight against AIDS into his professional career as a singer and songwriter. (He performs regularly with an extraordinary a cappella group, The Flirtations, and has a solo album out called *Purple Heart*.) He wrote the now famous AIDS anthem "Love Don't Need a Reason," which became the theme song for AIDS "walkathons" across the country, and "Living in Wartime," which was the opening song for Larry Kramer's Broadway play about AIDS, *The Normal Heart*.

AS A SCRUPULOUS CRITIC OF BOTH THE medical establishment's and the AIDS activist community's AIDS propaganda, Callen has weathered countless attacks. Precise and fiercely blunt about his views, Callen has always been a maverick, an independent thinker who opts for facts before political correctness.

Last year, after a decade of unrelenting AIDS activism, Callen burned out. Having completed his book, he "retired" from the AIDS movement, resigned from all the organizations he had co-founded, and moved out to a quiet life in Los Angeles, away from the cacophony of the AIDS debate. "I got tired," he says, "of having the shit kicked out of me. I want to start taking care of myself now." Sadly, despite his herculean efforts to fight AIDS over the last decade, Callen is now penniless—living in L.A. in subsidized AIDS housing. His book was torn apart critically, primarily by gay reviewers who were offended by Callen's unorthodox views about AIDS—perhaps most notably, his damning critique of AZT. One even went so far as to say that the book was "dangerous" and urged people with AIDS not to read it.

Joseph Sonnabend, one of the AIDS epidemic's most devoted, ingenious, and ground-breaking physicians, is also retreating, feeling bitter and misjudged. Because of his insistence that AIDS is caused by a multitude of factors, that HIV alone is not the cause, that AZT is not the answer, he has been gradually wedged out of the scientific community he once commanded. He founded AmFAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research), the multimillion-dollar AIDS research organization, and, together with Callen, the Community Research Initiative, which compiled the data that led to the FDA approval of aerosolized pentamadine, the PCP prophylactic.

Sonnabend works with hundreds of patients every day, applying his collected wisdoms in a tireless effort to keep them alive. And despite his successes, he has been referred to in print as a murderer and a quack. Like Michael, he's had enough. "I'm thinking of moving back to London and setting up a practice there," he says. "I don't think I'm wanted here."

The three of us leave the cafe and say goodbye. Michael has to rush off to a memorial service for one of the singers in the Flirtations. (Yes, AIDS.)

I watch Sonnabend and Callen go down the street, and it strikes me more than ever how important they are and how sad it is that the good people always get clobbered. Mainly because they're ahead of their time. It strikes me that this community eats its own—it has succeeded in demoralizing to the point of collapse two of its most critical, devoted, and brilliant members. Callen has left the AIDS stage, Sonnabend is following. Both, I believe, will depart with the resonance of tragic heroes whose downfall was inevitable, and a direct result of their own courage.

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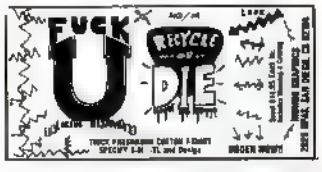

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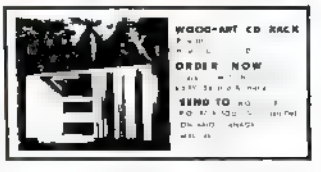

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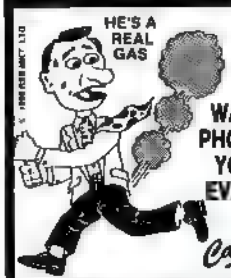

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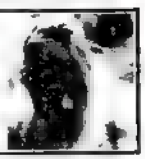

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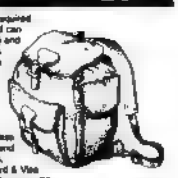

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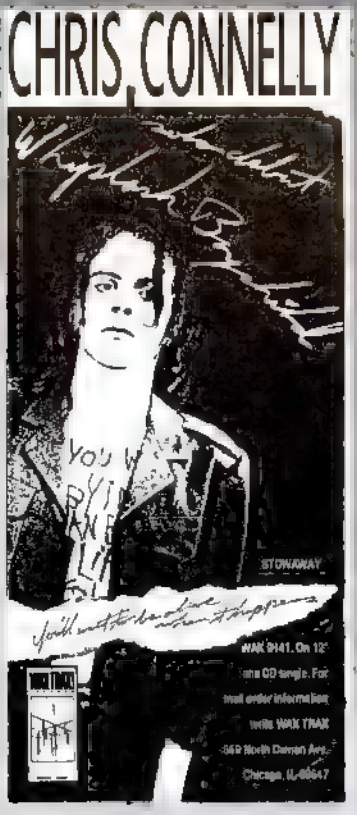

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BACK PAGE

Rock's baddest babes really shake rattle.

DEAN CHRISTOPHER dishes it with Ka-Ka.

ROCK GROUPS KEEP GETTING younger and dirtier. This trend has finally produced the youngest, filthiest act ever—Ka-Ka!

Ka-Ka travels with two nannies, a pediatrician, and six mommies. Ka-Ka is the only band ever to be dissed for leaving dirty diapers in its limo. The band is so young that the rhythm guitarist hasn't even been named yet! (Just call him "Male.")

Ka-Ka means trouble. The band members bust up day-care centers and spill Similac and Cranapple on the audience. They are undisciplined, uncaring. Some promoters won't book them due to their frequent onstage spit-ups.

Still, the anticensorship lobby strongly supports Ka-Ka. "If they want to drop their diapers and make potty, I'm right behind them," says one gutsy woman from Southfield, Minnesota. "Well, what if they *do* trash playpens and yank the ears off bunnies? We must remain open to *all* forms of artistic expression," harps a bearded Montessorian from Beaverton, Oregon.

"Prudes hate and fear words like *wee-wee*, *big doo-doo*, *poopy-head*, and *heinie* because they don't understand the values of the culture the group represents," argues Ka-Ka's wunderkind producer, 12-year-old Winky "Little Biff" Dorkopolis, who left school at age 9 for what has obviously become a brilliant career in rock promotion. "Nobody else on the Neo-Weaned scene can touch Ka-Ka."

There are six in the group, ranging in age from 4½ years down to 10 days (as this went to press). They are from varied ethnic backgrounds; four boys (Big Ernesto, Bix, Cereal Man, and "Male") and two girls (Francine and Poofie). Only Cereal Man still drools uncontrollably, although all spit up quite often. Thanks to newborn "Male," Ka-Ka is the only band that can legitimately feature breast-feeding in its videos.

SPIN Granted Exclusive Interview!

For reasons that SPIN's senior management appears unwilling to discuss, no editors or reporters were available to interview Ka-Ka once the word came down that we were, in fact, to get the scoop (so to speak). Perhaps they were on assignment in the Middle East. So this reporter loaded his tape recorder and met Ka-Ka and the band's entourage at a world-famous luxury hotel, which requested anonymity. The following is a transcript of the entire interview.

(A series of clicks; whuffing in the mike; a paper rustles.)
SPIN: Is it on yet? Hello, hello.
A DISTANT WOMAN'S VOICE: Ernesto, that's not nice. Stop touching that.
SPIN: Hello, hello—oh, it's working now. Let's start over here. How'd you decide on the name Ka-Ka?
MALE: *Glllrrrmmnn brb brbbllrrrmn.*
BIX: Where's Mommy? Want to see Mommy!
CEREAL MAN: She pushed me!
POOFIE: Did not!
CEREAL MAN: *(Shoving her hard)* Did too!
POOFIE: Did not! *(Smashing Cereal Man with yellow plastic Danzig milk cup)* Dooty face!
SPIN: Is that Ka-Ka as in *caca*—you know, excrement?
BIX: Mommmmmy-y-y!
BIG ERNESTO: Gimme toy!
(Unintelligible gruff words; much crunching and rustling noise as SPIN reporter grapples with Big Ernesto for microphone.)
SPIN: *(Becoming audible)* . . . little scum-dipper . . .
MALE: *Flurrrmmnn blblblllmmner!*
SPIN: Uh, when did you form the group?
(Much chaotic noise: An infant wails disconsolately. Glass is shattered. A loud digestive report is followed by a sharp slap. Sudden torrential gushing of liquid and glargg sound.)
SPIN: Hey, what the—
A MOTHER: Gladine, bring a wet towel. Quickly, please!
(More gurgling and gushing.)
GLADINE: You don't usually see so much come out of such a small child.
A MOTHER: The towel, Gladine.
SPIN: *(To a mother)* Was that creamed corn?
BIX: *Mommmmmy-y-y-y-y!!!*
ANOTHER MOTHER: Awww, whassa matta wiffa *baaaaaaaby*? Dissums kissums Mommums wiffa *baaaaaaaby*?
(Lifting and cuddling noises. Happy gurgling.)
CEREAL MAN: She did *too* push me! Snot! Snot! Snot!
POOFIE: *(Smashing Cereal with red-and-black metallic Megadeth lunch box)* Stupid face!
SPIN: Big Ernesto, let's return to you with a question about the micro-groupies, and . . .
BIG ERNESTO: Where's my present? I want my present!
SPIN: Um, maybe after the interview, we can—
BIG ERNESTO: Want present *now!* Big Ernesto *star!*
A MOTHER: I think we need another towel, Gladine.
MALE: *Greeemmm. Blurrrfffimmms. (Some very loud digestive eruptions.)*
SPIN: Oh, boy. Do you suppose we could continue this, uhhhnnn, in another room? *(Unidentified scuffling.)* Hey—get offa me, or I'll . . . *(Background shouts: I did* not! *Gimme present! She did* so! *Suddenly a child screams out in pain, then another. And another.)*
A MOTHER: Why, you disgusting *bully!* Let him go right this— *(The SPIN microphone goes dead.)*

ILLUSTRATION BY MARTIN MAYO

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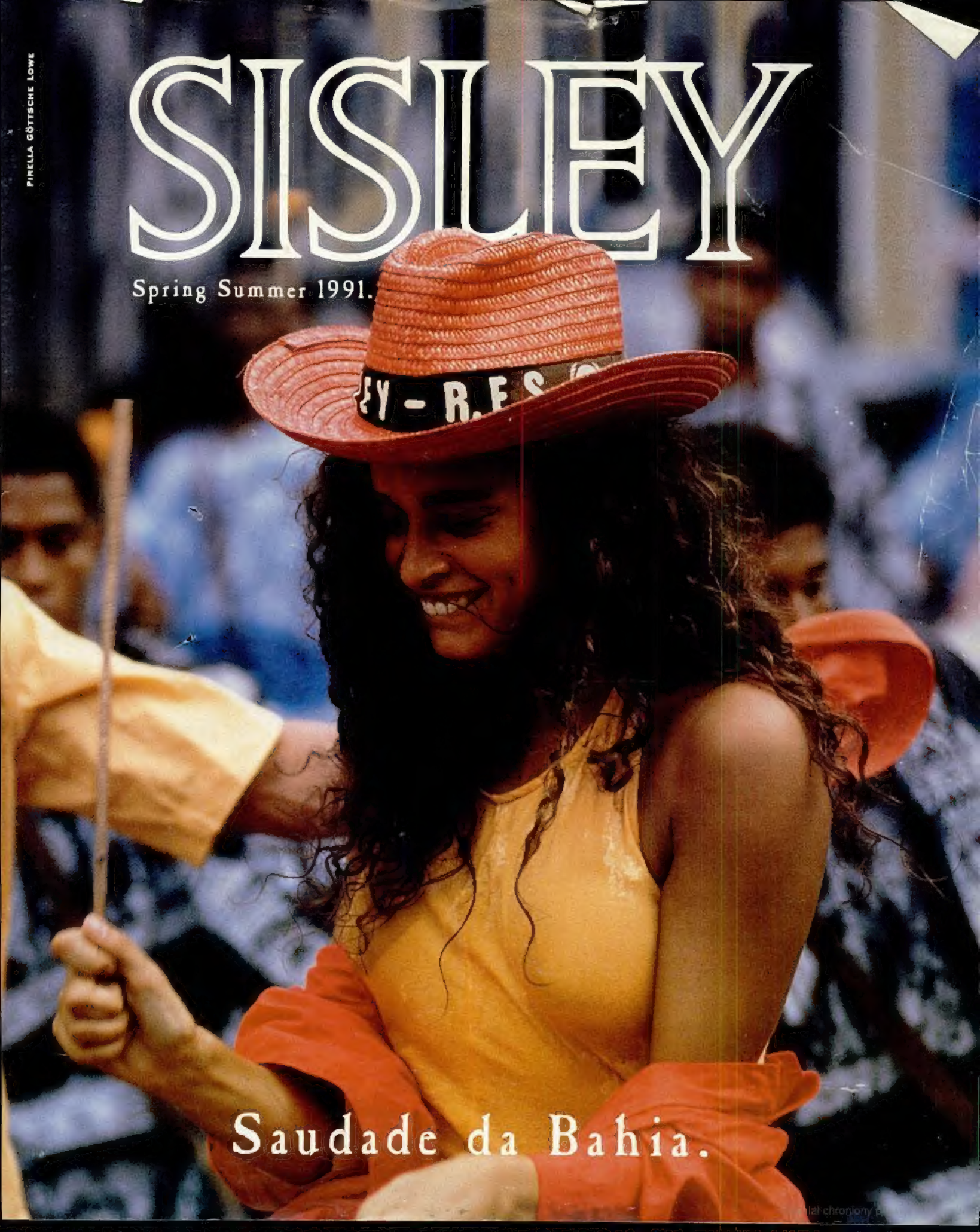
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